

Tomatoes get red 'n' roll treatment

King sends cables to Algerian president-elect, Assad

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Friday sent a cable to the president-elect of Algeria, Abdulaziz Bouteflika, congratulating him on winning the presidential elections held on Thursday. King Abdullah said Jordan looks forward to strengthening bilateral ties with Algeria. Also on Friday, King Abdullah sent a cable to Syrian President Hafez Assad congratulating him on Syria's independence day. The King wished Assad continued health and the Syrian people further progress and development.

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Hizbullah vows to avenge Israeli occupation of Lebanese village

BEIRUT (AFP) — Israel's occupation of a village in southern Lebanon drew angry threats of revenge from Hizbullah guerrillas on Friday while the government protested over the action to an international truce committee.

Hizbullah politburo chief Mohammad Raad, also a member of the Lebanese parliament, warned that the Shiite Muslim movement would teach "the enemy an unforgettable lesson."

Israeli troops and the allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia which moved in on Arnoun on Thursday were fortifying the almost-deserted village Friday as the Israeli army warned against attempts to impede the operation.

Dozens of Israeli soldiers and SLA militiamen backed by bulldozers, tractors and trucks worked through the night erecting barbed wire barricades, digging trenches and placing obstacles on roads to Arnoun, which has become a symbol of resistance against Israel's 21-year occupation of Lebanon.

Lebanon filed two complaints with the international committee monitoring an April 1996 truce accord over the Arnoun seizure and the injury of a cameraman by Israeli army fire.

The government charged that Israel violated the terms of the agreement under which the Jewish state and Lebanese guerrillas committed to spare civilians.



An elderly couple walks on Friday through barbed wire and rubble to cross out of the southern Lebanese village of Arnoun. Israeli troops and their allies in the South Lebanon Army sent bulldozers to clear the entrance of the village before occupying it on Thursday (AFP photo).

Hizbullah terrorists and the planting of bombs in the area," the army said in a statement.

One Israeli soldier was killed and several wounded Monday in a bomb attack claimed by Hizbullah near Beaufort Castle — an 11th century fort overlooking Arnoun and which is Israel's largest military post in the zone.

The SLA said it was setting up a new position in Arnoun to "prevent the infiltration of terrorists into the village and then

into the security zone."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the move was a new policy of responding strongly to attacks on Israeli soldiers in Lebanon, where more than 1,200 Israelis have died since Israel first invaded the country in 1978.

Lebanon's permanent representative to the United Nations has been told to send a message to U.N. chief Kofi Annan to seek a halt to the "dangerous" invasion.

France, a member of the truce committee, meanwhile expressed disappointment with Israel's action. "We hope that all measures will be taken to ease the tension," said foreign ministry spokeswoman Anne Gazeau-Secré.

The Israeli army briefly in February, surrounding it with barbed wire to prevent the entry of guerrillas, but Lebanese demonstrators ripped down the barriers.

Prince Hassan named chairman of intellectual property body commission

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Policy Advisory Commission of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) on Thursday elected HRH Prince Hassan as its chairman in its first meeting held in Geneva.

The commission was established by the organisation with the aim of benefiting from the views of its members, prominent international figures with experience on the impact of the application of intellectual property rights on the economies and development process of developing countries.

Members represent all regions of the world and include experts, officials, ministers and former officials and the former presidents of the Philippines and Tanzania.

The organisation offers technical and financial support to member countries.

In his address to the inaugural session, which he chaired, Prince Hassan, a founding member of the commission, said the advisory group will "help WIPO in setting future policies which would enhance global economic growth and wealth creation by sharing the views of individuals from the different regions of the world on economic, social and political matters pertaining to intellectual property protection."

"From administering intel-

Belgrade rejects international force for Kosovo

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — Yugoslavia on Friday rejected a proposal to deploy an international force to Kosovo contained in a U.N. plan to end the conflict in the Serbian province. Yugoslavia's U.N. Ambassador Vladislav Jovanovic said Belgrade rejected outright any international military presence in Kosovo but told journalists here his government would be prepared to discuss an arrangement involving civilian peacekeepers. He was speaking after submitting a written reply to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's peace proposal announced a week ago to end hostilities. Annan called for a halt to NATO bombing in return for a withdrawal of Yugoslav forces in Kosovo and the return of refugees to the province under the protection of an international military force.

'Sexual assault charges dropped against former minister'

By Saad G. Hattar

AMMAN — A controversial rape case brought against a former minister by his Filipina domestic helper took a new twist on Thursday when the plaintiff retracted her charges, judicial sources told the Jordan Times on Friday.

"The Philippines national has backtracked on her previous accusations and, therefore, the case was dropped," said one source.

The source gave no further details. Nor did he divulge whether the plaintiff would face legal prosecution for "misleading justice."

Unconfirmed reports revealed, however, that the

plaintiff dropped the case after having received JD 20,000 in an out-of-court settlement.

But sources close to the former minister refuted those reports and stressed that no financial settlement has been reached.

"We never paid a single penny," said one source, who requested anonymity.

He added that the former minister returned home from a trip abroad as "soon as he heard the news."

"He is back in Jordan and ready to testify if the police decided to summon him," the source told the Jordan Times.

Former ministers do not enjoy political immunity.

The Filipina helper, in her late thirties, had filed an unprecedented suit against the former official accusing him of raping her on April 1 at his residence.

The Philippines embassy in Amman followed up on the helper's case but declined any public comment since the charges were filed on April 10.

In her initial statement, the plaintiff charged that the former minister took advantage of his family's absence and sexually assaulted her.

She told police then that he "must have put a certain substance in my tea cup which made me dizzy with a heavy head."

The sources close to the

former minister refuted press reports that he "fled" the country for fear of being convicted in the rape case.

"This is not true. The official left Amman on April 6 and we all bid him farewell, four days before the charges were levelled," the source explained.

According to the same source, the domestic helper took up a "two-week temporary" mission at the former official's residence on March 31.

In her initial statement, the plaintiff charged that the former minister took advantage of his family's absence and sexually assaulted her.

She told police then that he "must have put a certain substance in my tea cup which made me dizzy with a heavy head."

The sources close to the

Clinton letter will help Arafat to delay announcement of state, official says

RAMALLAH (AFP) — U.S. President Bill Clinton will soon send a letter to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat making the most explicit statement yet of U.S. recognition of the Palestinians' right to self-determination, a senior official said on Friday.

But the letter, designed to encourage Arafat to postpone a planned unilateral proclamation of Palestinian independence in May, will fall short of the kind of clear recognition of their right to statehood made by European leaders last month.

"This letter comes within the framework of steps agreed

upon in the Washington summit meeting between Arafat and Clinton on March 23," a senior Palestinian official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The Clinton letter is due to be delivered to Arafat ahead of a series of meetings of the Palestinian leadership in late April when a final decision will be taken on whether to declare a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on May 4, when a five-year interim period set down in the Oslo peace accords with Israel ends.

Clinton's message will not contain a direct request for Palestinian leaders to

announce a delay in their statehood proclamation, he said.

But the message will be intended "to bolster Arafat's position to take this decision, especially since he faces a strong current of opinion within the ranks of the PLO Central Council that he should go ahead and announce a state on May 4," the official said.

Several Palestinian newspapers carried an article last week by Ahmad Qourie, the speaker of the Palestinian legislature and a long-time Arafat advisor, in which he urged Arafat not to postpone the announcement of a state. Senior figures in Arafat's own Fatah faction

have also urged him to stick to the May 4 deadline.

The Palestinian side has been asking the U.S. position set out in the letter should be "Gaza plus," the official said, referring to the formula used by Clinton when he made a historic visit to the Gaza Strip in December.

Clinton affirmed then that the Palestinian people were ready to "determine their own destiny on their own land."

"The Palestinians want the U.S. position in the letter to be more than the expressions used in Gaza but [they will accept] less than an explicit recognition of a state," the official said.

NATO continues strikes as thousands leave Kosovo

Kosovo could be emptied soon, UNHCR says; NATO sheds little light on convoy attack

Agencies

THOUSANDS OF ethnic Albanian refugees poured out of Kosovo as a renewed exodus on Friday as NATO vowed to pursue air strikes against Yugoslavia and tried to put behind the deaths of civilians in a convoy bombed on Wednesday.

Yugoslavia's official news agency Tanjug said NATO had carried out about 25 strikes on targets around the Kosovo provincial capital Pristina on Friday evening, including the airport at Skopje and the nearby town of Lipjan.

Serb media said on Friday two NATO planes had been shot down over Montenegro on Thursday and another had crashed in Bosnia overnight.

Tanjug said the Yugoslav air defence force had shot down two NATO aircraft and a missile during Thursday's NATO attacks over the Montenegrin capital Podgorica.

"The planes had been active over the region of Podgorica on Thursday night," Tanjug said, quoting a statement from the Second Yugoslav Army information service in Montenegro.

picking up."

Many of the refugees pouring into neighboring countries had not had a meal in days, the World Food Programme (WFP) spokeswoman Christine Berthiaume said.

"This is the first time we're seeing refugees in such an inhumane condition, extremely weakened by lack of food," Berthiaume said.

In Geneva, the United Nations refugee agency said Yugoslavia had resumed mass expulsions of ethnic Albanians "with full force" and seemed intent on driving all of them out of Kosovo.

The spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Kris Janowski, said at least 12,000 people had streamed out of the Serbian province into Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro in the space of 24 hours from Thursday to Friday morning.

"A couple of months ago it would have seemed unbelievable to the civilised world that the Serbs would actually expel the entire civilian population but this seems to be reality now."

Janowski added: "The brutalities of the expulsions as well as the scale of the expulsions is

Refugee numbers in Kosovo crisis

LONDON (R) — Here is a list of numbers in the Kosovo refugee crisis from governments and international organisations:

Population of Kosovo: 1,956,196 (1991 census)

Ethnic Albanians in Kosovo: more than 1,800,000 (unofficial estimate)

Displaced from Kosovo homes in past year: 960,000 (NATO, Friday)

Fled or expelled from Kosovo since NATO began air attacks on Yugoslavia on March 24: 534,200 (UNHCR, Thursday)

Fled or expelled from Kosovo since fighting began in March 1998: 700,000 (UNHCR, Friday)

Surrounding countries with substantial refugee numbers:

In Albania: 318,000 (UNHCR, Thursday)

In Macedonia: almost 130,000 (Macedonian interior minister, Friday)

In Montenegro: 63,200 (UNHCR, Friday)

In Bosnia: 31,500 including Yugoslav Muslims (UNHCR, Thursday)

In Turkey: 10,291 (Turkey, Wednesday)

In Croatia: 5,000 to 6,000 (UNHCR, Sunday)

In Bulgaria: 2,300 (UNHCR, Sunday)

day. They walked past minefields through a no-man's land where some 45,000 earlier refugees were stuck for days as Macedonia hesitated to let them in.

State Department spokesman James Rubin said this could explain why the flow of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo had recently increased.

At the Yugoslav-Macedonian border a train disgorged some 3,000 ethnic Albanians on Fri-

Yugoslavia, international observers said.

"We're hearing that quite a few more are heading this way," said Owen O'Sullivan, a field officer for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Kukes.

(Continued on page 2)

On the occasion of

Al-Hijra Year

Arab Bank is honoured to convey to

His Majesty

King Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein

and to the Arab and Islamic nations
its felicitations and best wishes



ARAB BANK

Jordan moving towards greater political, civic openness — Rawabdeh

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdur-Rauf S. Rawabdeh has said that Jordan is going through a transitional phase and is heading towards a new era which will witness greater openness towards political parties and civil institutions.

Rawabdeh was also quoted as saying in an interview with the Abu Dhabi newspaper Al Bayan, published on Thursday, that Jordan maintains close ties with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), but denied reports that Jordan is seeking membership in the GCC. The premier stressed that the issue was never discussed by Jordan or Saudi Arabia.

Rawabdeh, who accompanied His Majesty King Abdullah on his trip to the Gulf states, said Jordan's relations with the GCC

entered a crisis following Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, but he noted that efforts to restore normal relations began under the late King Hussein and have been followed up by King Abdullah. "We are building strong ties with the Arab Gulf states, but such a move will be no means be at the expense of Jordan's relations with other Arab countries, as King Abdullah has explicitly stated," said Rawabdeh, emphasising that Jordan is opening up to the whole Arab World and will not accept any interference in its internal affairs, as it does not intend to interfere in other countries' affairs.

Replying to a question on whether he preferred that his government be backed by a political party, Rawabdeh said: "At the moment I believe that no

single party constitutes a majority in Parliament. It is better for a prime minister to be neutral in order to be able to play the role of an arbitrator between political parties by opening up to all of them, without being committed to a particular party."

"What gives guarantees and credibility to any government in Jordan is its achievements, and I believe that political parties in Jordan and the other parts of the Arab region have not yet become sufficiently deep-rooted and have not reached a stage at which they can assume a real parliamentary majority to rule within a true democratic system," said Rawabdeh.

In reply to a question on whether Jordan still faces threats with regard to what has been dubbed as "substitute homeland" for the

Palestinians, Rawabdeh said: "Israel has long-term objectives across a wide area of the Arab World stretching from the Euphrates to the Nile, but this does not intimidate Jordan, which is a well-established nation determined to confront all types of conspiracies."

Asked to assess Jordan's ties with Syria, Rawabdeh said: "I declared in my government statement to Parliament that we intend to strengthen our ties with neighbouring Arab countries, including Syria, with which we hope to have very strong ties."

In reply to a question on whether he intends to visit Baghdad, the prime minister said: "There is nothing preventing such a visit, but at the moment there is no reason to justify it."



PRAYING IN ON CONFISCATED LAND: Palestinian protesters perform Friday prayer on their confiscated land seized by Israeli settlers to expand the Jewish settlement of Morag near Rafah on Friday. Hundreds of Palestinians gathered at the site to protest against the Israeli official settlement policy and to demand the return of their land which settlers had attempted to seize two days before (AFP photo)

Sudan peace talks scheduled to resume in Nairobi next week

NAIROBI (AFP) — Peace talks between Sudan's Islamic junta and rebels from the mainly black south are scheduled to resume in the Kenyan capital Nairobi next week. Kenyan officials said on Friday.

The negotiations, under the auspices of the regional Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), are expected to open on Tuesday and end on April 25.

Kenya is the chair of IGAD's ministerial committee on the peace process in southern Sudan. Other committee members are Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda.

The civil war between the rebel Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudanese government is Africa's longest, with the lat-

est round lasting for 15 years, and the death toll since 1983 estimated at more than a million people.

The SPLA is demanding greater autonomy for the largely Christian and animist black south from the Islamic and Arabic north.

The talks will resume amid a dispute between the SPLA and the Khartoum regime over the extension of a ceasefire aimed at allowing aid agencies to cope with the effects of last year's devastating famine in southern Sudan.

A three-month extension of the truce announced in January expired on Thursday and Khartoum announced that it observes a comprehensive cease-fire in all parts of the south from Thursday on condition that the SPLA agrees

to the wider truce.

The SPLA for its part said on Sunday that it will extend for a further three months the ceasefire in Bahr Al Ghazal, the province worst hit by the famine, but rejected the government offer of a comprehensive truce.

"[President Omar] Al Bashir's declaration of a meaningless 'comprehensive ceasefire' is actually a ploy intended to kill the humanitarian ceasefire," the SPLA said in a statement.

"There is therefore no situation of a comprehensive ceasefire for the SPLA to respond to," it added, that a comprehensive truce would be part and parcel of the overall political solution to the war in southern Sudan and would be discussed at the peace talks on April 20-25.

Prince Hassan named chairman of commission

(Continued from page 1)

Emphasising how today's advanced world trading system gives developing countries no choice but to enforce intellectual property rights to strengthen their own economies, Prince Hassan said the question of whether to enforce these rights or not is no longer valid. "The issue at hand is how to do it without short-term suffering. There must be comprehensive international cooperation.

Developed countries must compensate and help to alleviate the negative socio-economic impacts developing countries would endure.

"The high cost of obtaining new software technology and 'know-how' together with counterfeiting of copyrights and trademarks as well as stress on the pharmaceutical industry will be and are being encountered by developing countries."

In Jordan many pharmaceutical companies manufacture drugs without licences, and an estimated 85 per cent of all software packages sold in the Kingdom are pirated.

Prince Hassan added that there are the problems of the costs of textbooks, software for students, governments establishing domestic offices and agencies of training of personnel, and other problems.

But he added "we must be positive. We must think of a more active flow of foreign investment, higher quality products for consumers, the enhancement of specific exports and avoidance of trade sanctions."

He said individuals and institutions must be given the opportunity to promote research and development. That way, he added, "the appreciation of creative efforts will, in turn, stimulate creativity and innovation thus

reaching a higher level of ethics. Innovative companies will have the opportunity to enter the marketplace giving them the opportunity to compete with the larger established companies."

Also Thursday, Prince Hassan visited the head office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in his capacity as member of the organisation's consultative committee.

He urged UNHCR Commissioner General Sadako Ogata to provide essential aid to the refugees of the Kosovo crisis. He pointed out the role that can be played by the Muslim World in providing aid to the refugees through an international Zakat fund, which Prince Hassan has advocated for the benefit of victims of conflicts and natural disasters.

Ogata, who briefed the Prince on the organisation's plans to secure relief supplies

and essential services to ethnic Albanian refugees until they are able to return to their homes, said the UNHCR will support Prince Hassan's Zakat fund proposal and follow it up with the various world relief organisations.

Prince Hassan had earlier submitted the proposal to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

In a press statement, the Prince warned against the consequences of ethnic cleansing and sectarian violence.

Prince Hassan said Jordan has provided relief aid to Kosovar refugees through the Hashemite Charity Organisation and noted that Her Majesty Queen Rania and other Royal family members visited the refugees to show the Kingdom's solidarity with and support for victims of war.

Prince Hassan returned home from his two-day visit to Geneva on Friday afternoon.

IATA conference to open next month

AMMAN (J.T.) — Royal Jordanian next month will host the 1999 Inflight Management Conference for the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Samer Majali, RJ vice president of passenger services has said.

The conference will discuss airline alliances and their impact on inflight services.

"During the conference there will be an interactive breakout sessions which will encourage delegates to identify and discuss the most appropriate strategies of inflight professionals to adopt in order to insure the highest possible profile in alliance discussion," he told the Jordan Times, on Wednesday.

"Participants will also learn about the techniques that help provide consistent inflight service standards and gain an understanding of passenger expectations of the concept of seamless travel," said Majali. HRH Prince Faisal will address the opening session of the conference which is scheduled to take place on May 5, said Majali.

The conference will also discuss on-board emergencies faced by flight crews, he added. It will also talk about the impact of time zone differences on the crew, Majali said.

NATO continues strikes as thousands leave Kosovo

(Continued from page 1)

Serb forces have been bombarding Albanian border posts and villages, apparently in an attempt to destroy sites used by the Kosovo Liberation Army to support its guerrillas fighting across the frontier in Kosovo.

NATO officials at a regular news conference in Brussels shed little new light on who was responsible for the killing of more than 60 ethnic Albanians on a road in Kosovo.

The alliance continued to reject responsibility for the bombing of more than one convoy of Albanian refugees on Wednesday.

"We don't accept any blame

for any other incident," chief spokesman Jamie Shea said.

But despite this assertion, Shea acknowledged that NATO was still investigating the results of the air strikes it carried out in southwestern Kosovo.

"When we have all the facts established, we will provide all the information," he insisted, urging journalists to turn their attention to the "real story" of the Serb security forces burning out villages.

Serbian sources allege that NATO bombers hit two separate convoys of refugees, one to the south of the town of Djakovica and one to the north, killing at least 75 people.

Western journalists have reported seeing scores of maimed bodies at both sites.

NATO appears to be accepting responsibility for the incident to the north of the town. But its account of what actually happened has raised as many questions as it has answered.

Military spokesman Giuseppe Marani acknowledged that the single "civilian vehicle" it admitted to having hit was "probably a tractor."

He did not add that the tractor was towing a trailer packed with refugees, as diplomats said NATO's top commander U.S. General Wesley Clark had told Alliance ambassadors on Thursday.

The agency said a bridge linking the towns of Smederevo and Kovin southeast of Bel-

grade was hit, the fifth Danube crossing to be targeted since NATO air strikes began on Yugoslavia on March 24.

Tanjung also said three NATO missiles landed early Friday on a camp for Serb refugees from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in Paracin, south of Belgrade but NATO denied the report.

Serb media said 24 people were injured in NATO's overnight attack on the Belgrade industrial suburb of Pančevo which hit an oil refinery, petrochemical facility and nitrogen plant.

At Novi Sad, Serbia's second city, a refinery was hit for the fourth time Thursday, struck by four missiles setting off a fire at the plant, Tanjung said.

The agency said a bridge linking the towns of Smederevo and Kovin southeast of Bel-

grade was hit, the fifth Danube crossing to be targeted since NATO air strikes began on Yugoslavia on March 24.

Djukicovic, who has tried to maintain a neutral stance, played down fears of a military coup in his small republic but told the Yugoslav army to stop interfering in internal politics.

Meanwhile, Serbian President Milan Milutinovic and Kosovo Albanian moderate leader Ibrahim Rugova met in Belgrade to agree that a halt to NATO bombings was a condition for launching political talks. Tanjung said.

A statement issued after the meeting said "it was jointly concluded that a halt to the bombing of our country is a condition without which the political process cannot be fully realised, because victims are equally all citizens of Kosovo,

regardless of their ethnic or religious origin, whether Serbs or Albanians."

Pentagon officials said on Friday the United States was considering calling up 33,000 reservists and National Guard troops.

British Defence Secretary George Robertson left open the option of deploying NATO ground troops in Kosovo while stressing that the alliance was pinning its hopes on air strikes.

"We continue to believe that the air campaign should force [Milosevic] to meet our demands," Robertson said in a speech prepared for delivery on Friday in the United States. "At the same time we must keep our plans for ground forces under review."

PRAYER TIMES

03:39 Fajr
05:01 (Sunrise) Duha
11:35 Dhuhr
15:12 Asr
18:10 Maghreb
19:31 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweileh Tel. 5920740 Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785 St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590 Terra Santa Church Tel. 4622366 Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811. St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751. Amman International Church Tel. 5865897 German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404 The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

It will be sunny and warm with temperatures rising slightly and winds easterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be warm, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 13/26
Aqaba 18/33
Deserts 09/28
Jordan Valley 16/31

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Aff Shukri 4998863
Dr. Khalid Ramadan 558723
Dr. Nidal Dahleh 5287195
Dr. Sa'id Tawfiq 4783285

IRBID:
Firas Pharmacy 5661912
Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004
Ruk Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IBRIDI:
Dr. Issam Al Salhi (02) 246858
Fouad Pharmacy (02) 275360

ZARQA:
Dr. Ratib Atallah (05) 994424

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199

HOSPITALS

IBRIDI:
Tehran (02) 710372, (02) 7103101

ZARQA:
Rosary Sisters Hospital (02) 7102831, (02) 7102011

Specialty Hospital: (02) 7103100

HOSPITALS

IBRIDI:
Princess Basma Hospital (02) 2755555

Roman Catholic Hospital: (02) 272275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital: (02) 7103101

Cairo: (02) 7103101

Colombo: (02) 7103101

Lyon: (02) 7103101

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:10 Tehran (RJ)
07:15 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
08:30 Aqaba (arriving at QALIA) (RJ)
09:25 Amman, New York (RJ)

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (04) 523200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (04) 52700 or (04) 523250. Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:00 Aqaba (arriving at QALIA) (RJ)
07:30 Cairo (RJ)
08:30 Aqaba (arriving at QALIA) (RJ)
09:25 Amman, New York (RJ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

10:30 Beirut (ME)
11:30 Paris (add) (RJ)
12:30 London (RJ)
13:30 Rome (RJ)
14:30 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
15:30 London (RJ)
16:30 Paris (RJ)
17:30 Bangkok, Doha (RJ)

Other Flights

11:15 Sanaa (YV)
12:30 Riyadh (SV)
13:10 Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
13:10 Milan (AZ)
14:00 Vienna (OS)
14:40 Istanbul (TK)
15:35 Beirut (ME)
16:00 Dubai, Muscat (EK)
17:00 Frankfurt (LH)
18:10 Paris (AF)
21:35 Cairo (MS)
00:20 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
00:55 London, Damascus (BA)
02:00 Belgrade (JK)

Other Flights

12:15 Aden, Sanaa (YV)
14:00 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GP)
14:00 Milan (AZ)
14:50 Vienna (OS)
16:00 Istanbul (TK)
18:35 Beirut (ME)
19:00 Dubai (EK)
22:35 Cairo (MS)
01:20 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
03:00 Damascus, Belgrade (JU)
05:55 Damascus, London (BA)
06:10 Frankfurt (LH)
06:25 Paris (AF)

Royal Wings (RW)

06:00 Aqaba (from QALIA) (RJ)
08:30 Aqaba (from Marks Airport RW)
19:45 Aqaba (from Marks Airport RW)

Erasing fear and shame is key component to identifying and fighting child abuse

By Dima Hamdan

AMMAN — The Department for International Development, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development, held a workshop on child abuse and stressed the necessity to develop professional skills in the detection, reporting and management of the physical and sexual abuse of children in Jordan.

The workshop was conducted on Thursday by three senior lecturers on child health at the Liverpool John Moores University, in Liverpool, England, who emphasized that professional institutes working with abused children must adopt a preventive rather than reactive policy to deal with child abuse.

The workshop focused on key issues including: how to diagnose injuries, the difference between discipline and child abuse, recognizing signs of abuse and behaviors that may indicate abuse, and how to respond and take action.

"We have accomplished the first stage, which is admitting that there are abusive physical and psychological patterns [in Jordan]," said Mo'men Hadi, director of the National Institute for Forensic Medi-

cine. "Now we have to move on and study the various methods to deal with this problem."

Hadi also stressed that the officially reported cases of child abuse are not representative of the actual cases. Experts dealing with child abuse say that the abused are very unlikely to report such cases, especially when it is of a sexual nature, mainly because they are either afraid or ashamed to talk about their ordeal.

Experts say they cannot determine, from available statistics, whether abuse cases have been increasing or are only more often reported.

"We live in a society where talking about [sexual] abuse is a taboo. Women are embarrassed to discuss this issue," said Captain Omaya Hourani, who works with the Family Protection Unit at the Public Security Department.

"To deal with this problem, we need to start with educating children in schools and teach them not to be embarrassed to talk about abuse that is inflicted upon them."

Wardam also found that most cases of abuse are sexual, and that females form the majority of the victims. Some experts

even say there is a correlation between sexual abuse and the increasing number of prostitutes in Jordan.

Lina Wardam, lecturer and clinical nurse at the University of Jordan, began working with abuse victims in 1984, a time when such cases were "hidden under the carpet."

"I started working in support groups with students from different faculties, where I found that seven of them were victims of abuse," said Wardam. "Five of them were abused sexually."

Sexual abuse is most likely to be inflicted by a relative of the victim like a father, a brother or a husband. Wardam says that victims find extreme difficulty in their marriages and they, in turn, are very likely to abuse their children.

"We live in a society where people find it hard to believe that a woman can be abused by her father or brother," said Wardam. "We often deal with women who either abused or neglected their children, because they were victims themselves."

Wardam also said abuse is more likely to occur in certain social conditions.

"Crowdedness is the key factor," said Wardam. "People

who live in big families, mainly in the camps, are most likely to get abused."

Experts in general agree that unemployment and financial hardship play a major role in encouraging domestic violence.

Jordan suffers from poor economic conditions where unemployment is officially estimated at 16 per cent and up to 27 per cent according to unofficial studies. Also, one fifth of the population live below the poverty line.

The workshop was attended by 50 professionals from ministries and institutions dealing with child abuse, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Development, the schools of medicine and nursing in Jordanian universities and the Royal Medical Services.

The department works to create the Higher Education Links Scheme. A link was established between the National Institute for Forensic Medicine and the Liverpool John Moores University in 1998.

The three-year link aims to support research collaboration and staff and curriculum development to raise the standards of care and well-being of children.

Man arrested, charged with sexual assault of school children

By Saad G. Hattar

AMMAN — A man accused of molesting students at an Amman elementary school has been arrested and charged with several counts of the sexual assault of a minor, a judicial source told the Jordan Times on Friday.

The case involves a janitor employed at the school, who is accused of molesting "several" young pupils, according to the source.

"The janitor is now in detention at Jweideh prison, pending his trial at the Criminal Court," said the source.

Legal procedures against the man were initiated several weeks ago, after one child reported an incident to his parents, who immediately moved to press charges against the man. Sources close to the

school, however, said the child "first notified a teacher who immediately informed the student's parents."

Initial investigations have established that the janitor was involved in "lewd and lascivious" acts with several elementary school pupils in the school, police sources told the Jordan Times.

"He is alleged to have made sexual overtures to young boys at the school and, in some instances, to have caressed sensitive parts of young boys," said the source.

A lawyer said that if the man is found guilty, his sentence could range from a minimum of seven and a half years to the death penalty, depending on the evidence presented during the trial.

School officials could not be reached for comment.

Police arrest pickpockets, search for three suspects in Na'our shooting incident

AMMAN (J.T.) — Police in the Karak governorate have found the body of Abdul Baseel Musa, a 23-year old student at Muta University, dumped on the side of the Karak-Kathra road.

A report in the local press Friday quoted police sources as saying that the man's death was caused by gunshot wound to the neck and that the victim had not been killed in the same spot where the body was discovered, but apparently had been moved to that area from another destination.

According to the sources, the body was moved to the National Centre for Forensic Medicine in Amman for an autopsy, while investigations are under-way to find the murderer.

Meanwhile, police in Amman announced the arrest of two aspects who they allege were in the habit of pickpocketing and handbag snatching. The suspect made their getaways in a rental car, police said.

The report in the local press on Friday said the two, in their twenties, were arrested by an officer who was driving his car near the Sixth Circle in Jabal Amman where an Arab woman of non-Jordanian nationality was screaming after two men riding in a car had snatched her handbag while she walked on the pavement.

The report said the police officer followed the car which sped away after the incident alerting other police cars in the

vicinity who also gave chase. Police finally arrested the suspects after their car collided with other vehicles.

According to the report, several other women had complained to Amman police about similar thefts by two men riding in a car whose license plates did not bear clear numbers.

Quoting the same sources, the report said preliminary investigations revealed that the two suspects, who were unemployed, admitted committing numerous thefts in a rented car.

Residents in rural areas make up 20 per cent of Jordan's 4.6 million populations.

The survey, Jordan's second since 1990, also showed that the Kingdom's fertility rates, once among the highest in the region, had declined sharply to an average of four births per woman — three children less than in the mid-1970s.

The results of the 1997 Jordan Population and Family Health in Jordan (JPFS) were released during a seminar held on Wednesday and chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf.

It was conducted by the Department of Statistics and the Maryland-based Demographic and Health Surveys Programme at Macro International, Macro Regional Coordinator Mohammad Ayad told the Jordan Times.

"But the survey shows that there are large discrepancies between urban and rural populations as the latter is lagging in terms of child and maternal health," he added.

The girls were en route to Amman following a trip to the Dead Sea.

Holland Friendship Association to build public garden in Amman

By Susan Resheq

AMMAN — The Holland Friendship Association has a plan to install a public garden in Amman as part of the association's efforts to strengthen relations between Jordan and Holland.

President of the Association Raouf Abu Jaber told the Jordan Times.

The new Holland Garden will be built under the supervision of the Holland Association, the main financial supporter of the garden, but Abu Jaber said the association will also ask the Greater Amman Municipality to grant the garden's land.

"Dutch gardens have mostly been known for their lily flowers since the sixteenth century. We will work on planting lilies throughout the garden, which will be a public garden for all citizens," Abu Jaber said.

The Holland Friendship Association was founded in 1996, and aims to improve relations between Jordan and Holland by creating social activities and charity projects which could help

citizens and needy people, Abu Jaber said.

Director of the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, Brother Andrew Carpenter, who is one of the association's members, told the Jordan Times that "improving relations between Jordanian and Dutch people will obviously help our work and ease setting up charity projects to help needy people."

The Holland Friendship Association includes around 60 members who are well-known Arab and foreign personalities.

They plan to visit Holland on May 23. They will visit cultural and historical monuments and some of Dutch factories.

The journey will cost the association around JD3,790, and will include 30 members from the Holland Friendship Association and 30 other people who are interested in visiting Holland.

A similar association will be founded in Holland under the title of the "Dutch-Jordanian Friendship Association" which

similar interests.

Population survey reveals urban-rural disparities in education health care

By Hind-Lara Mango

AMMAN — A 1997 population survey, released on Wednesday, shows that Jordan faces the daunting challenge of ensuring that rural children and their parents have better access to education, health, maternal care and family planning facilities.

Residents in rural areas make up 20 per cent of Jordan's 4.6 million populations.

The survey, Jordan's second since 1990, also showed that the Kingdom's fertility rates, once among the highest in the region, had declined sharply to an average of four births per woman — three children less than in the mid-1970s.

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"But the survey shows that there are large discrepancies between urban and rural populations as the latter is lagging in terms of child and maternal health," he added.

The girls were en route to Amman following a trip to the Dead Sea.

...Many women in Jordan have a greater number of children than they want. If all unwanted

fertility rate would be 2.9... more than half of married

women want to stop

childbearing or have already been sterilised'

— JPFS report

applied to the next five years as projections are usually made using past results of surveys and censuses," said Sri Poedjastuti, a demographer from Macro International.

Approximately two per cent of the population is malnourished. Eight per cent of citizens there are chronically malnourished, while five per cent of them are underweight, the survey added.

It also found that only 15 per cent of Jordanian women breastfeed their children during the first six months of their baby's life — a practice recommended by doctors worldwide.

The survey also found educational disparities between rural and urban areas as the majority of urban women have had formal education. Secondary or higher education stood at 70 per cent and 58 per cent for urban and rural women respectively.

The report recommends that information, education and communication programmes dealing with the benefits of family planning be strengthened to target the less educated women and those living in rural areas in southern Jordan.

Urban-rural variations also appeared in terms of access to sanitary facilities. Unlike rural residents, most urban houses have their own flush toilets and access to a public sewage system.

Survey findings can be

obtain ante natal care from a doctor, most rural women rely on a nurse or a midwife during delivery.

Hussein Shakhreh, head of the General Department of Statistics, attributed the sharp decline in fertility rates — once among the highest in the world — to improved family planning and education.

"This decline is mainly related to the use of family planning and education. The use of contraceptives has doubled over the last 20 years," he said.

Jordan has one of the highest rates of contraceptive use in the Arab World. Half of the population of married women in Jordan use contraceptives, with the intra-uterine device (IUD) being the most popular while four per cent resort to female sterilisation.

The use of contraceptives among urban women was 20 per cent higher than among rural women, and rural women have one child more than urban women.

"Maternal mortality rates, that is mothers who die during or after pregnancy, stand at 79 deaths per 100,000 births in Jordan. This is quite low when compared to other developing countries where the rate is 150 to 500 per 100,000 births," added Ayad.

While the majority of urban births take place in a hospital with women more likely to

ed births were prevented, the total wanted fertility rate would be 2.9... more than half of married women want to stop childbearing or have already been sterilised."

As for Jordan's education record, the survey showed that nine out of ten children between the ages of six and 15 are educated. Differences in male and female education only appear after the age of 35, when female illiteracy increases.

"There is a negative correlation between education and the age of marital status," Shakhreh told the Jordan Times.

He explained that the age of first marriage for females in Jordan is increasing with a tendency for later marriages.

"The improvement of educational opportunities, particularly for girls, has resulted in their staying in school longer and subsequently has raised their age at first marriage," he said.

The mean age for marriage in Jordan is 21 with a six-year gap in marital age between women with more than secondary education and women with less education.

There is also an inverse relation between education and polygamy. The percentage of females with primary education and more in polygamous unions decreases to 12 per cent, compared to 19 per cent for women with no education.

Patriotism on trial: Anti-normalisation committee attacks Arab-Israeli actors at Al Fawanees Theatre Group press conference

By Dima Hamdan

the American Ford Foundation.

Abdullah Hammoudah, a member of the anti-normalisation committee who was in the audience, said foreign organisations operating in Jordan channel their efforts into promoting the peace process, a subject that is completely unacceptable to the committee.

Hammoudah, who has written several anti-Zionist and anti-normalisation articles in the local press, said that the Ford Foundation has funded several projects in Israel.

"The Ford Foundation is the organisation that conducted a study on forms to eliminate the Palestinian resistance," he said. "It also funds several Israeli organisations."

Several members from Al Fawanees, however, objected to this point, saying that Hammoudah has failed to provide documented evidence of his claims, although he promised to do so on several occasions.

Nader Omran, member of Al Fawanees, said that certain professional associations, who signed the boycott statement, have simultaneously received funds from foreign organisations.

"Some members from these associations have normalised

'An Israeli is not only a Jew... There are

Arabs who are more Israeli than the Jews.

An Israeli is any person

who recognises

the state of

Israel and considers himself

an Israeli citizen.

One of them is

Mohammad Bakri'

— Muwaffaq Mahadin
JWA

on the principle that Palestinian groups present plays that have "a true patriotic spirit" and do not promote normalisation with Israel.

Mohammad Bakri made a short statement saying "My identity is not my passport. It is the content of my work and my conscience."

He concluded his statement by expressing disapproval that "ignorants" are imposing certain specifications on the definition of "patriotism."

Al Qasaba, winner of the Palestine theatre award, is officially sent by the Palestinian Ministry of Culture. It will perform "The Immigrant" at the Royal Cultural Centre on Saturday.

There are three Palestinian groups participating in the festival this year; Al Qasaba, Theatre Day and Al Bayader.

What's Going On

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Algeria's new twist

ABDULAZIZ BOUTEFLIKA, who on Friday won the elections for president in Algeria and who is being described by news agencies as the choice of the country's powerful military, has tough tasks ahead of him. Not only will he have to defend his election against charges of fraud and election rigging, but he has to carry out the daunting mission of ending his country's seven-year-old bloodletting, a task that defied all the efforts of the many presidents and prime ministers who attempted to address the country's fratricide.

Bouteflika's election was marred by the pullout of all the other six candidates who accused the establishment of rigging the election on his behalf. The six are all veteran politicians and former officials in recent and past governments. Their charge of fraud is being echoed by European governments. The word has apparently made Interior Minister Abdelmalek Sellal "sick" because this is what he has heard "since (independence) 1962, fraud, fraud, fraud."

One wonders why the Algerian authorities were only hearing fraud since 1962 from its citizens. In fact, when elections that President Chadli Benjedid ensured were fair and free in 1992 resulted in an overwhelming win for the Islamic Salvation Front, the authorities, led by the National Liberation Front that dominated Algeria since independence and to which the new president belongs, declared them null and void, throwing the country into its bloody crisis.

With the new political chasm in the Algerian body politic created by the election of Bouteflika, we wonder if the new president will be able to tackle the country's chronic problems. If he is the shrewd politician some say he is, he should put political squabbling behind him and tackle head on the country's civil war. For that is the task that each president since 1992 failed to execute. Meanwhile, Bouteflika should not belittle the effect of so many people in and outside Algeria who cry foul.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Zaid Hamzeh said the claim that religious traditions lie behind women's failure in municipal elections is inaccurate or at least does not tell the whole story. Hamzeh cited the municipal elections in Iran two months ago where 25 out of the 37 female candidates were elected — a high figure even in developed countries. What happened in Iran, which fully implements the Islamic Sharia, does not occur in other Muslim and Arab countries, where women have gained their electoral rights long ago. Rather, the opposite happens as women's success in elections continue to face "failure after failure" although the number of female candidates is the same as male candidates, said the writer. Hamzeh then wondered how the same Islamic traditions, which allow women to vote, prevent them from writing, and force them to elect a male candidate. The writer concluded that this is not a religious but rather a "male issue," that men choose the Koranic verses which best serve their interests, neglecting verses where both sexes are treated equally. According to the writer, women should free themselves from male dominance, pointing out that they will be put to the test again in the coming electoral elections in July.

Al Dustour's Oreib Rintawi said that in 1998, 612 people were killed and 17,177 injured in 43,343 traffic accidents, which caused JD130 million. A country in war would not suffer such losses, which are caused by a lack of safe traffic standards and behaviour, said Rintawi. Another "terrifying" fact, according to an official report, is that there are 16 deaths for each 1000 car accidents in Jordan — a proportion ten times larger than in developed countries. This means that it is ten times less safe to drive here than in these countries, noted to the writer. Although improving roads and traffic legislation is important, promoting a social and cultural public awareness among the next generation is a must, argued the writer. Although people know they are violating the law, they keep doing it for social, cultural and psychological reasons, said the writer.

Either it's terrorism, or it's not

By Gwynne Dyer

"IT IS not possible to doubt the fairness of a Scottish court," said Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi last month, signalling that he would shortly hand over two Libyan suspects in the 1989 bombing of Pan American Flight 103 for trial in the Netherlands (but under Scottish law).

Now the accused men, Abdel Basset Al Megrahi and Lamen Khalifa Fhimah, are locked into underground cells awaiting trial in Camp Zeist, near Utrecht. A great deal of money and many United Nations personnel have been deployed to bring the two former Libyan Arab Airlines officials to trial — and yet, the court could easily find them not guilty, in which case the truth about Flight 103 may never be known.

"No matter who is funding international terrorism, it's still international terrorism," said former British intelligence officer David Shayler last August, alleging a MI6 plot to assassinate Qadhafi in 1996.

Shayler says he learned of a botched MI6 attempt on Qadhafi's life in February of that year (a roadside bomb killed several innocent bystanders, but missed the Libyan leader) when he was talking to agents from Britain's other intelligence agency, MI5, which is responsible for foreign operations. Shayler is now in Paris successfully resisting extradition to Britain, so the truth may never be known about that operation either.

Many fewer Libyans died in the

attack on Qadhafi (whether British intelligence was involved or not) than the 270 Americans. British and others who died when Pan Am Flight 103 crashed on the Scottish town of Lockerbie in 1988 (whether Libyan intelligence was involved or not). But the game is the same regardless of the precise number of lives lost. Either it's international terrorism, or it's not.

Nobody ever talks about extraditing MI6 operatives to Libya. If they really did set up the operation to kill Qadhafi, it was "deniable," and the British government could subsequently disown its "rogue elements." The same, of course, goes for Libya.

Qadhafi does occasionally talk about trying to extradite the U.S. officials who ordered the 1986 bombing of Libya in which his adopted daughter was killed, but that's pure posturing. State terrorism by fighter-bomber, however flimsy the pretext (two U.S. soldiers had been killed by a bomb in a Berlin disco, and Washington blamed Libya) is never illegal. But state terrorism that uses bombs in suitcases is another matter.

It was a bomb in a suitcase (a Samsonite suitcase, in fact) that brought down Pan Am 103. After a three-year investigation led by Scottish police and assisted by the FBI, charges were laid against two Libyan airline employees who are said to have inserted the fatal suitcase into the inter-airline baggage handling system in Malta. The bag was allegedly transferred to Pan Am 103 in Frankfurt, and then

exploded over Scotland after the plane had left London for the Atlantic crossing.

When Libya refused to send the two accused men to Scotland for trial, the Western powers persuaded the U.N. Security Council to impose sanctions against Libya in 1992; no flights in or out, and no imports of oilfield equipment or arms. But in the past year the embargo has been crumbling, as various African leaders defiantly flew into Tripoli to congratulate Qadhafi on his 30th year in power — and at the same time, Britain has been re-thinking the case, and pulling the reluctant United States into the mix.

The key move was in August 1997, when the British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, persuaded Washington to agree that the two suspects could be tried in a neutral venue. It would still have to be Scottish judges deciding the case under Scottish law, since Pan Am 103 had fallen on Scottish territory, and the suspects, if convicted, would have to serve their time in Barlinnie prison in Glasgow (though with U.N. personnel supervising them).

But no senior Libyan intelligence officers would be required to testify at the trial, and nobody would try to trace the orders for the bombing to Qadhafi himself. And you have to ask: why did Britain and the United States make this deal if they were really sure of their case? But the best way of answering this question is to ask it the other way around.

Why did Qadhafi finally agree to

send these two men to trial? The embargo was a great nuisance, but it did not fatally undermine the Libyan economy, and it was already leaking badly. And if Qadhafi really did order the bombing of Pan Am 103 as retaliation for the 1986 U.S. bombing of Libya, wasn't he afraid that these men, once out of Libya, would be pursued and incriminate him in the crime?

Understand Qadhafi's actions, and you understand almost everything. There are only two possible outcomes to the trial (which will not even start for many months), and they are both positive from his point of view.

If Fhimah and Megrahi are guilty, and if they are convicted, they will still not squeal and implicate Qadhafi, for their families remain in Libya. In that case, Qadhafi blames the outcome on the invincible anti-Arab prejudices of a Western court — and he is still freed from the U.N. sanctions, for now that they have been suspended, would take the votes of Russia and China (who will not play) to reimpose them.

If the two Libyans are found innocent, or the case is simply thrown out of court after opening arguments, it gets even better for Qadhafi. And based on what is currently known about the Anglo-American case, this is quite possible, for the Anglo-American case seems to depend on the flimsiest of circumstantial evidence.

If we were concerned with an ordinary crime committed on a

Friday or Saturday night anywhere in Scotland," says law professor Robert Black of the University of Edinburgh, who has been deeply involved since 1994 in the negotiations that led to the Libyan suspects' arrival in Holland on Monday. "The relevant prosecution authorities would have marked the papers 'no prosecution'."

The details need not detain us here, since they will all come out during the trial. But almost every item of prosecution evidence, from the provenance of the electronic timer that set off the bomb to the alleged identification of one of the Libyan accused by the Maltese shopkeeper who sold the suitcase, is plausibly disputed by the defence. (The shopkeeper, over 19 interviews, consistently described an older and taller man than either of the Libyans.)

There is, moreover, another plausible suspect: Iran, which in late 1988 was burning with resentment over the allegedly accidental shooting-down of an Iranian civil airliner over the Gulf by the U.S. warship "Vincennes." Ayatollah Khomeini, then still alive, had vowed vengeance, and an airliner for an airliner might have seemed an appropriate revenge to the young militants around him.

If I were a betting man... Never mind, but it will be an interesting trial — and there are no foregone conclusions.

The writer is an independent London-based journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries

Double standards, Kosovo and Israel

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

Columnists last week focused their attention on the NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia and on the Israel media campaign against Jordan.

Milosevic, said Hassan. They are two faces of the same coin, he said. Sharon is very happy to see around one million Muslims fleeing their homes and suffering the agony of displacement and hunger, said Hassan. Kosovars leaving their homes remind Sharon of what the Jewish gangs did to the Palestinians half a century ago when it drove around 800,000 Palestinians from their homes. Those gangs destroyed around 450 Palestinian villages in order to replace them with Israeli settlements, added Hassan. The writer complained that Sharon can say and do whatever he wants and nobody punishes him, or even protests against his atrocious actions. Who else could perpetrate such crimes except the Zionists and those like them: the fascists, thundered the writer.

Al Dustour's Oreib Rintawi criticised the Israeli leaders for provoking Jordan with their statements in the Israeli media in order to drum up support during the election campaign. Israel, earlier this year, predicted that the Kingdom's future would become uncertain after the death of King Hussein and that the Kingdom will be destabilised. Then Israel announced that it would not give Jordan its share of the water as stipulated in the 1994 peace accord. Now the Israeli Army Radio is spreading rumours alleging Jordan's intention to release Ahmad Dakamseh, who killed a number of Israeli schoolgirls while on duty. The radio argues that Dakamseh should not be released because his hands are still bloody, said Rintawi. Yet, how may Israeli criminals who killed scores of Palestinians be released after spending only a little time in jail, asked the writer. Some of them were not even punished, he said. Jordan is not proud of what Dakamseh did, said Rintawi. But it hurts our ego that some external power from west of the river is trying to dictate what Jordan is and isn't supposed to do, complained Rintawi.

The selective reality of war

Out of Order



Brian Brown

are inherently wrong, and this includes both the Alliance's campaign and the alleged ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Serb troops. For others, the issue is more complex. What constitutes an appropriate cassis belli? When is it acceptable to step in and put innocent civilians at risk of death and injury, supposedly to save a greater number of innocent civilians? Does the concept of "violent pacification" work and is there such a thing as a "good" war? Are such conditions even applicable to Yugoslavia, and if so, is NATO an appropriate vehicle for action? The most difficult question of all, though, is how is it possible to answer these other questions without reliable information?

The modern media system allows everyone to have their say, but not everyone is telling the truth. Maybe no one. And what is true one day may not be true the next. So how does one choose who or which viewpoint to support, before history uses its advantage of 20/20 hindsight to render a more balanced judgement? Propaganda, ideology or lies: take your pick. And have faith.

RECOMMENDED READING: *Junkie*, by William Burroughs. A fictional account of one addict's life, *junkie* draws on Burroughs' experience as a life-long drug user. A powerful account of the day-to-day, shot-to-shot existence of someone hooked on a dangerous and addictive substance. Set variously in New York, New Orleans and Mexico City, the novel also offers the underworld's perception of "straight" society.

and extensive devastation wrought upon civilian Yugoslavian installations and huge resulting casualties. Such employment of selective reality makes it difficult to believe anything coming out of Belgrade. On the other hand, while NATO's spokesmen have a better track record of admitting mistakes than the just and infallible Yugoslav leadership, there are the issues of repeated mistakes and the language used in justifying the air operations. NATO's argument that its mission is humanitarian and is aimed at minimising civilian casualties is undermined by each "mistake" that kills Yugoslav citizens and the people it is purportedly protecting. The sanitized language of "collateral damage," "seduced" missiles and other neat phrases used by planners and generals is intended to instill a mindset in the public that war is not war, people don't die horrible deaths and lives and countries are not destroyed. It turns war into a holiday excursion or a walk in the park.

The propaganda flying on both pro- and anti-NATO camps does its part to obscure truth as well. U.S. President Bill Clinton and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder are portrayed as Hitler in the Chinese and Yugoslav press. Russian politicians evoke the country's historic ties to the Balkans to whip up anti-West feelings. Americans find it difficult to distinguish between Milosevic, the leader, and Yugoslavia, the country and the people, similar to American public perception of Saddam Hussein and Iraq. This situation leads to statements such as deployment of nuclear weapons and the possibility of World War III. It also leads to mistaken assessments like the one put forward by a Canadian politician, who suggested that armed conflict cannot solve humanitarian problems. It can, and did in Europe in the Second World War. It is difficult to believe that Hitler would have been persuaded to shut down the death camps in Nazi-controlled Europe by a few diplomatic communiques issued from distant capitals.

The bottom line is that much of what is presented as the truth, about what is happening in Yugoslavia as a result of the NATO bombing campaign has to be taken on faith. You either believe it, or you don't. For pacifists, the conflicting media campaigns are not much of a problem: all violent conflicts

Features

Jordan Times, Saturday, April 17, 1999 7

Kurd clans warehouse of votes in Turkish polls

By Elif Unal
Reuters

PERCHED ON an isolated peak on Turkey's vast Mesopotamian plain, the imposing walls of a tribal castle dominate the landscape just as the tribe's chiefs lord it over surrounding Kurdish society.

Thousands of rural Kurds, squeezed between a bloody armed conflict and a deep poverty, are guided in the elections tomorrow by the advice of respected clan leaders and landlords.

The chateau home of the Turk clan — a large Kurdish family influential in the Derik district of the south-eastern Mardin Province — boasts embrasures in its walls and hefty iron doors that are locked and guarded by armed men at night.

Inhabitants of the clan's Kasr-i Kanco village gather in the smoky, half-lit saloon of a nearby building constructed for clan guests. They have come to offer condolences to one of the clan leaders, Ahmet Turk, who recently lost one of his two wives.

Politics is a part of life the gathering, as such events do, turns quickly to a discussion of Sunday's national and local elections.

"I have been in politics for years not because I am an aga (chief) but because of the people. If I disagreed with the people's will I could not survive," Turk says as his followers drink traditional bitter coffee, listening in

"Turk served as an MP for the now defunct Kurdish Party (DEP), but was later expelled from parliament and prosecuted on accusations of links with Kurdish separatist guerrilla Abdullah Ocalan's Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Ocalan, captured in Kenya, awaits trial in Istanbul for his role in a conflict that has killed over 29,000 in the south-east.

Ahmet's nephew, Besir, a PKK guerrilla, died near the Syrian border in 1990 in a shoot-out with Turkish troops. His elder brother was shot dead in 1973 in a clash with a rival clan.

This time the clan's parliamentary candidate is not Ahmet but his relative Ferhan Turk standing for the DEP's successor, the Peoples' Democracy Party (Hadep).

Hadep failed to pass a 10 per cent national threshold in 1995. But it is stronger in the south-east and could make inroads in local polls held parallel to national elections. General prosecutor Vural Savas, calling for ban on Hadep last week, said this would be tantamount to terrorists entering government.

Despite his visible influence on the villagers, Turk said he did not think clans should marshal and direct the thousands of votes effectively at their disposal.

The tribes are deeply ingrained elements in Kurdish society and are a powerful force both in south-east Turkey and in neighbouring Kurdish northern Iraq.

In Turkey, successive governments have hesitated to bring in sweeping land reform. Tribal leaders by and large back the state. Their opponents, the PKK, espouse Marxist-Leninist doctrines of land distribution and have targeted Kurdish tribal chiefs from the outset of their campaign.

"We will vote for him," she adds as she prepares food — only tea and bread — for her children. Her family ekes out a meagre living from her husband's village guard salary of 50 million Turkish lira (\$150) a month.

Feyzullah Demir, himself a village guard, expects help from his chief. "When we elect him and send him to Ankara, we want him to work for our retirement rights and health."

The manpower of each tribe is estimated between 5,000 and 20,000. Hasimoglu dismisses accusations that the tribes are feudal and says the system is based on fair sharing of resources.

power by taking advantage of the temporary weakness of the state and its needs.

Seeking local support, Turkey began to arm loyal tribes in 1985 recruiting them into 'village guard' militia, just as the Ottomans armed their ancestors to fight Armenian rebels.

"Tribes have their most powerful position in the south-east now in the republic's 75-year history, since some of them co-operated with the state and became village guards to fight the PKK," regional assembly deputy Hasimoglu told Reuters.

The PKK admits the village guards are one of the most effective weapons in the government's campaign against them.

The estimated 8,000-strong Batuyan clan in Sirkak's Cizre district is one such loyal tribe. Abdullah Demir, a Batuyan leader, is an independent parliamentary candidate.

Clan members say they back him to the hilt.

"He is our master, our aga. He is a good man who looks after the poor," says 26-year-old Meryem, living in a dirty makeshift hut in Kuncat village with her four children.

Poverty in this region is perhaps the greatest friend of the PKK as it searches for support. But clan loyalty can prevail.

"We will vote for him," she adds as she prepares food — only tea and bread — for her children. Her family ekes out a meagre living from her husband's village guard salary of 50 million Turkish lira (\$150) a month.

Feyzullah Demir, himself a village guard, expects help from his chief. "When we elect him and send him to Ankara, we want him to work for our retirement rights and health."

The manpower of each tribe is estimated between 5,000 and 20,000. Hasimoglu dismisses accusations that the tribes are feudal and says the system is based on fair sharing of resources.

"It is not a feudal system at all. Generally everyone has their own land. But some villages belong to a single man. In that case the villagers and the owner of the village share the crop 50-50," he says.

But he does not rule out clan influence at the ballot box.

"Tribal chiefs never pressure their members to vote for a party or a candidate. But because of loyalty and respect for them, they are able to provide a certain amount of votes."

Another regional deputy Mahmut Duyan describes relations in a tribe as similar to the relations in a family. "The clan is a big family which follows the word of its father or leader".

Duyan's father, leader of the Sinki clan, powerful in the Kiziltepe district of Mardin, backs his son. The elder Duyan, angered by former prime minister Tansu Ciller's Conservative Party which dropped Mahmut as candidate, put forward his younger son as independent.

"We'll teach her a lesson...We ourselves have some 8,000-9,000 votes and there are others who will support us," says the elderly Omer Sakir Duyan in their campaign office.

All parties are said to have attempted to earn clan votes.

But the rival conservative parties, The True Path and Motherland, are the two which have gained most support from the clans so far.

Local observers say the clans have been weakened by the loss of those who have fled from the armed conflict to the towns and cities. Many villages in the region were evacuated by the security forces in early 1990s in order to reduce local PKK support.

For now, however, the clans, like their castles, remain a bastion of social and political life in the Turkish south-east.



Turkish riot police detain a demonstrator during a pro-Kurdish party rally in the southeast Turkish city of Diyarbakir last week. Emergency rule authorities in Turkey's turbulent southeast banned a pro-Kurdish party rally and made hundreds of arrests in a clampdown before national and local polls (Reuters photo)

Lebanon dreams of bringing back its railways

By Jacques Lhuillery
Agence France Presse

THE LITTLE station in Baalbek in Lebanon's Bekaa valley has seen better days.

It was back in 1982 that its stationmaster, Georges, last saw a train passing through. But he still shows up at the little red-tiled station office, built by the French at the turn of the century.

The rails have rusted and are overgrown: the shutters of the buffet have gone rotten; the tank with its swivelling hose where the engines took on water has long since run dry. Three old steam locomotives gently rust away, forlornly waiting for someone to buy them. Lebanon's 15-year civil war struck a body blow at the country's rail network.

But now plans are afoot to bring the trains back. The transport ministry has dusted down a 1994 study on the feasibility of reopening the coastal line from Tripoli in the north to Tyre in the south.

It will not be easy. The railways still own the land, but in the years since the last train passed that way hotels and holiday homes have mushroomed all down the seashore, in complete disregard of the law. The study, carried out by Soferrail, a subsidiary of the French state railway, envisaged a dual track electrified line that would pass through Beirut. The cost was estimated as at least \$400 million.

The idea was that it would carry 260,000 passengers a day by 2015 — a not insignificant contribution to easing the capital's nightmarish traffic congestion.

"Ninety per cent of the study is still valid, and the rest just needs to be brought up to date," Canadian, Czech, Japanese and U.S. firms have been in the bidding for the job for the last month," Mohammed Hadi Abdel Aziz Bajai, an advisor to Transport Minister Najib Mikati, told AFP.

That still leaves the finance. The

Lebanese authorities hope they will find "friendly countries" to come up with grants, if they cannot attract foreign or private investors. The government is also considering linking up with the Syrian network.

Not that the narrow-gauge Beirut-Damascus line is likely to be brought back into service. It was built in the early part of the century to carry goods — mainly Jordanian phosphate — between Lebanon and the Arab hinterland, and times have changed too much since then. But there is talk of rehabilitating the line between Rayak, a rail hub in the heart of the Bekaa, and the Syrian town of Horns for freight traffic.

And more ambitiously, Mikati has raised the possibility of a line through Syria and Iraq, linking Beirut with Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

For some people, such plans hark back to the dreams of earlier railway builders.

At the turn of the century, the French

conceived the idea of linking Europe and Africa, with a line from Turkey to Egypt, passing through Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. The only section they managed to build was the stretch between Rayak and Aleppo, in northern Syria.

During World War II, British troops made their contribution to Lebanon's network.

Twisted rails lie half buried in the

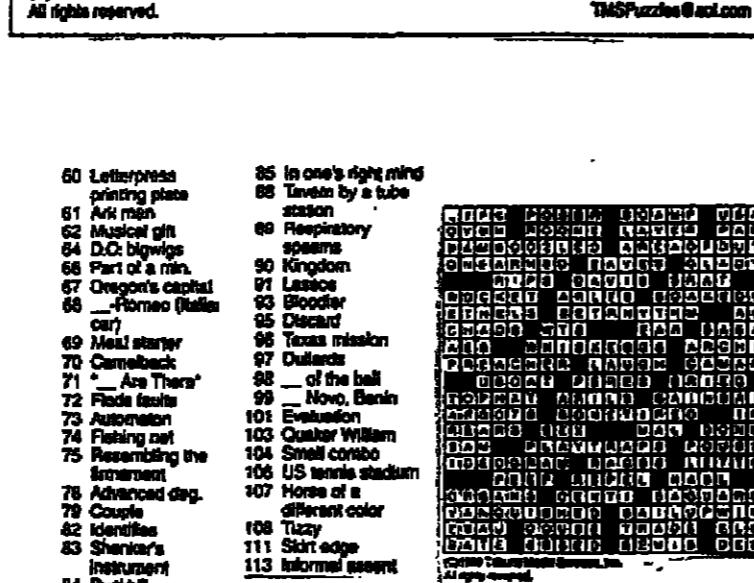
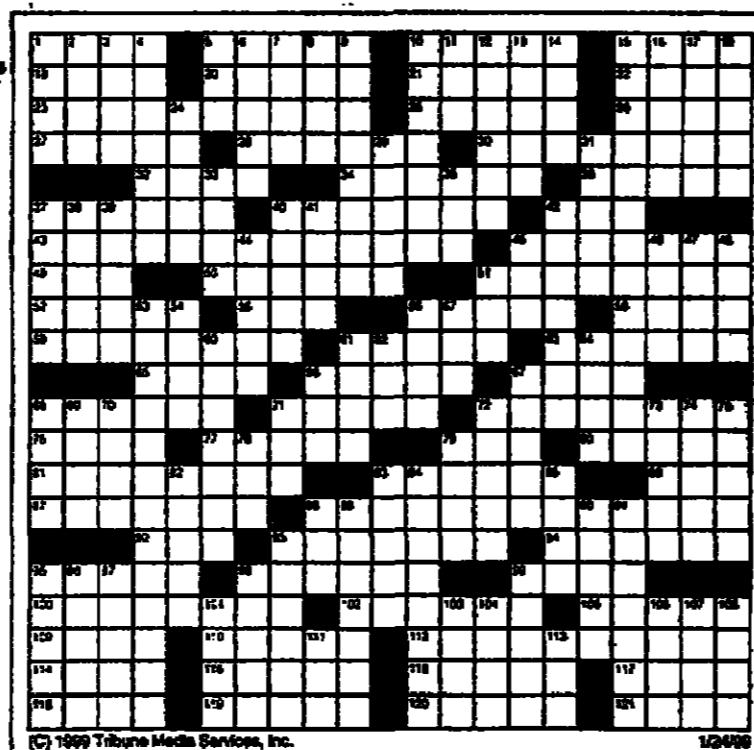
sand or overgrown by weeds all along Lebanon's coast bearing silent testimony to their efforts, and to a time when trains ran freely from Tripoli to the Palestinian port city of Haifa, before the state of Israel was created.

But the transport ministry asserts firmly that its plans are not a throwback to the past, whatever some dreamers might think. "A railway is absolutely essential for the country, and a top priority for us," said one official.

Meanwhile back in Baalbek, Georges who long ago swapped his smart station master's cap for a little woolly hat, oversees arrivals and departures of buses serving the Bekaa valley.

But he hasn't given up on his dream of seeing trains passing through Baalbek again. And he keeps going to his station. "To make sure they don't steal the rails," he explained.

The Saturday Crossword

MYSTERY ROSTER
By Edgar Fontaine, Dighton, Massachusetts

Algerian women in traditional dress leave a polling station guarded by armed police in a village near Algiers, Thursday. Voter turnout some seven hours into Algeria's one-candidate presidential vote was 36.41 per cent of the electorate after six of the seven candidates collectively withdrew Wednesday from the presidential race saying they had proof of ballot-rigging (Reuters photo)

Islamic conservatives stand in way of Saudi tourism drive

By Habib Trabelsi
Agence France Presse

SAUDI ARABIA aims to launch a tourism drive to diversify revenue sources but its efforts are being blocked by Islamic conservatives.

"It's better to die than to embark on tourism, which is a source of depravation and insecurity," warned Ahmad Turkistani, a professor at Riyadh's Islamic University.

He raised the alarm after the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry organised a forum on tourism under the patronage of Mecca's governor, Prince Majed Ben Abdell Aziz.

Experts and businessmen at the forum held in March called for the creation of a tourism department or ministry and for pilgrims to Islam's holiest sites in nearby Mecca to be allowed to visit other parts of the Gulf

Arab kingdom.

"It's time to correct our stand on tourism. In future, it should play an appropriate role in the national economy," said Prince Majed.

Abdel Mohsen Al Hakir, head of a tourism committee set up by businessmen in the late 1980s, said the kingdom could cope with almost 12

million Muslim pilgrims a year, up from the current figure of seven million.

"They can contribute towards developing tourism," he said.

Hakir, himself a major force behind tourism projects, said the sector could turn into Saudi Arabia's second biggest money-spinner after oil, overtaking industry and agriculture.

Saudi Arabia, which sits atop the world's largest oil reservoir, has invested more than 25 billion riyals (\$6.66 billion) in tourism projects since 1995.

It has almost 330 hotels with a total of 30,000 rooms, with the main infrastructure in place in the fertile province of Asir near Yemen, in the western resort of Taif, and in Yanbu on the Red Sea.

But Saudi Arabia does not issue visas for tourism, a subject which raises eyebrows among the conservatives who fear an influx of tourists would damage Islamic values and customs.

Muslim visitors spend an estimated \$1.66 billion while domestic tourism generates almost another \$400 million a year.

The figures pale in comparison with

the huge sums spent by Saudis abroad, notably in Europe: anywhere between five and \$15 billion a year, according to estimates from the Saudi union of chambers of commerce.

More than four million Saudis travel abroad for their holidays, especially to escape the summer inferno.

"For the last 12 years, we've been stressing at every conference that the tourism industry is a vital source of national revenue, but without any response," Hakir said.

And yet, he said, Saudi businessmen have invested more than \$500 billion abroad.

"We should first invest inside the country," he said, while acknowledging that such ventures were risky given the absence of any national body to protect tourism investments.

Faced with the refusal of Saudi theologians to concede any ground to western influences, Hakir said the kingdom should promote its own brand of "clean, family tourism".

He said the sector could achieve three objectives: boost the economy, compensate for low oil prices, and create jobs for Saudi Arabia's growing number of young school-leavers.

to French throne
Sports he is dying

The King of Jordan pretends to be in Robert Ferdinand Marly's Chamber of Paris on Friday, according to the newspaper Le Figaro. The royalist daily says he has been admitted to hospital with a sudden severe heart attack, but denied it has been caused by a stroke. It has learnt from a statement sent to the press that he is recovering well and will be soon able to leave hospital.

ambassador to S. Africa
died in Pretoria

The Jordanian ambassador to South Africa died in Pretoria on Friday. He was 62 years old. His death was attributed to a heart attack.

Asked about the possibility of increasing the volume of the trade protocol with Iraq and encouraging farm exports to Saudi Arabia, the minister described the protocol as being more political than economic and related to the United Nations. "As such, we are on the receiving side and do not have much say in specifying these limits," he said pointing out that

Business & Finance

Daily

Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Asfour: Government plans gradual reduction of income tax, customs duties over a number of years

**** DURING** A meeting with the president and board members of the Amman Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Trade Minister Mohammed Asfour said the government plans to gradually lower the income tax and customs duties over a number of years to compensate the losses that the treasury will incur. "(The compensation) will be through raising the sales tax by the same rates that the income tax and customs will be reduced," he added noting that the sales tax is a fair tax as it is distributed among all consumers according to their income. "The low level income group will be the main beneficiary from this tax," he emphasised.

Asfour told the leaders of the commercial sector that lowering interest rates on credits requires reducing the rates on deposits and that would push the public towards shifting the savings from Jordanian dinars to foreign currencies. "Consequently, this will cause an imbalance in the purchasing power and the stability of the dinar exchange rate," he said. Asfour assured his audience that the government will not intervene and will not reimpose its control over products and supplies.

Asked about the possibility of increasing the volume of the trade protocol with Iraq and encouraging farm exports to Saudi Arabia, the minister described the protocol as being more political than economic and related to the United Nations. "As such, we are on the receiving side and do not have much say in specifying these limits," he said pointing out that

there is no indication for raising the trade volume despite the government's intensive efforts for that purpose.

Asfour continued to say that consolidating bilateral ties with Arab states cannot be achieved except within specific programmes and plans as well as exchanging visits with delegations from those countries. He called on the private sector to seize all available opportunities to consolidate this cooperation and prepare feasibility studies to be presented to all Arab and foreign investors.

Responding to the issue of barriers that hinder the flow of Jordanian goods to the Palestinian market, the minister described the Palestinian market as a promising market for the Jordanian economy. However, he said "the Palestinian market is tied to agreements that Jordan cannot sign without including the Israeli side in it." Asfour added that Jordan has asked the U.S. ambassador in Jordan to raise the value of goods exported to the Palestinian territories from \$20 million to \$50 million and to increase the number of products on the A1 lists.

Noting that the Israeli side imposes many barriers on Jordanian goods such as inspection, loading and unloading, closure of borders and a maximum 24-hour stay for truck drivers, the minister promised to minimise a number of these hindrances in order to better the trade exchange between the two sides (Al Ra'i + Al Dustour).

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 1999

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Looks like a domestic matter will require your attention for the next couple of days. If there's something that needs fixing around your place, that could be it, but it's more likely you're just storing up provisions. Do you have a year's worth of supplies put away yet? If not, make that a priority.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 19) Try not to take sides in a battle between two hot-tempered people. To you it looks like nothing, but to them it means a lot. Just keep your opinions to yourself a little while longer. They'll eventually figure it out by themselves. And, if they do it on their own, they won't blame you for making them look silly. Try not to giggle, either.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) It would really be neat to go on a long vacation, if you could only find the money. Truth is, you do have the money, but you keep spending it. You know that's true. How can you hold onto more of it? It's going to take some self-discipline, but it can be done. If you don't know how, ask a Cancer or a Virgo to help.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) You and a strongly opinionated person could but heads today. You think you know the right answer, but you can't get a word in edgewise, and that's very frustrating. Instead of getting upset or angry, find somebody who will listen to your ideas. It's worth talking to a friend out to lunch just to vent some steam.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) Looks like emotional issues are getting in the way of direct communications. Now, don't you get to worrying, too. Be calm, patient and decisive with a person who's having trouble making a decision. To you it looks simple, but that's because you're being objective. The other person hasn't reached that level yet. With your coaching, it is possible.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) A friend would be a big help to you right now. You need to talk with someone who can see things from a slightly different perspective. You also could use some helpful advice from a person who's been wherever it is you're going. Why should you have to learn everything the hard way? Get someone with more experience to explain what you need to do next.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Looks like there could be a bit of a hassle between you and an older woman today. This person wants to tell you what to do, and you have a little bit of resistance. But, you know what? It looks it's for your own good. Just go along with the programme, and you'll be glad later that you did.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This combination adds strength and determination to just about whatever is going on. It also helps people make practical decisions. That's not a problem area for you, but these conditions might spur you to move on something you've been contemplating, but haven't quite made up your mind about yet. That Cancer moon tends to give you a shove in the right direction.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You'd much rather discuss philosophy than pinching pennies. Today, the latter is exactly what you should do. Find those coupons and get to the store. If you really are clueless when it comes to wise shopping, get a Cancer or a Taurus to help. They'd be delighted that you're finally taking an interest in practical matters.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) This is a fine day to change things around at home. Toss out stuff you don't need anymore and get in some new, better items. You and your mate need to be in this conversation together. Don't do it all by yourself or you'll throw out something the other person likes. This process can be upsetting at times, but the outcome will be beautiful.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) You need to figure out how to make something happen, and quickly. If you're outside your area of expertise, don't complain. You're supposed to be the smart one, right? And what does the smart one do when faced with a problem like this? Ask another expert, of course. All you have to do is find him or her, and get the answer. Soon.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) Your intuition should be excellent, so trust it. A person who's been pushing you around may have a problem that you never realised. It might not have anything to do with you, by the way. Be gentle about it, but go ahead and ask if everything's OK. You may be able to provide some comfort, ease the other person's mind and get rid of all that nagging.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst.

Russians sent \$10.6b abroad last year

MOSCOW (AFP) — Individual Russians sent a total of \$10.6 billion abroad last year, ITAR-TASS news agency quoted Deputy Finance Minister Sergei Ignatyev as telling a parliamentary budget committee on Thursday. The government has recently proposed an amendment to the exchange control regulations which would bar Russians from taking more than \$5,000 in cash abroad at any one time.

"We want to limit the export of capital used to finance the parallel economy or illegal imports," Ignatyev said, noting that much larger sums were frequently taken out of the country in a flight of capital rather than expenses for tourism.

The customs services have reported several cases of private individuals smuggling out more than \$1.5 million in cash.

Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov threatened drastic measures in January to prevent a flight of capital which he estimated at \$1.5 billion a month.

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ASE's general price index may continue falling

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — The Amman Stock Exchange's (ASE's) general price index fell to its lowest level since the beginning of the current year amid expectations that the decline will continue for few more days, brokers said Friday.

They attributed the decline to lack of liquidity and institutional buying in addition to pressure from foreign investors selling some of their holdings of shares, especially in the banking sector.

The bourse bulletin showed that turnover amounted JD3.7 million, almost the same figure it registered a week ago.

Shares of 56 firms were traded in the stock exchange last week.

Prices of 34 firms declined

against 11 which recorded

increase and another 11 whose prices did not change.

JD200,500 compared to JD212,500 at the end of the previous week.

The ASE's weekly bulletin showed that the general price index closed the week at 178.59 points compared to 178.59 points at the end of the previous week, a drop of 6.09 points.

The bourse bulletin showed that turnover amounted JD3.7 million, almost the same figure it registered a week ago.

Naim Naqeb, a broker at the stock market said the move by foreign investors to sell some of their equities in the Arab Bank affected the supply of the bank's shares, which exceeded demand and caused the sharp decline in

the prices.

"I believe that JD200 level is a psychological barrier for the Arab Bank share. If this level is broken, it will cause further declines in the Arab Bank share price," Naqeb told the Jordan Times.

The broker indicated that the decline in the Arab Bank share prices reflected negatively on other blue-chips, especially in the banking, mining and pharmaceutical sectors.

"Even if foreign investors halt their selling of Jordanian shares, we will not be able to improve [the stock market] performance because institutional buying is still away from the market," Naqeb

added.

Other brokers indicated that recent Jordanian political moves, especially with Arab Gulf states, will not affect activities in the stock market in the short run.

They said the visit by His Majesty King Abdullah to some Gulf states in the past week would not bear "an imminent fruit" to the national economy in general and the stock market in particular.

"We have heard words from these nations and time will tell if these words will translate into actions. Results might appear in the long run," the broker, who asked not to be named, added.

U.S. envoy chides Israel over copyright fraud

Israeli-American Chamber of Commerce Thursday night.

His remarks were released by the embassy on Friday.

Walker called the counterfeit problem the "one dark cloud" in U.S.-Israeli trade relations and said that "while the promise of change is there, and some small efforts have been initiated, this is still our number one trade issue."

Washington placed Israel last year on its Special 301 Priority Watch List, the second most serious category of countries violating intellectual property rights (IPRs).

"This year some in the U.S. industry are demanding that Israel be moved up to the 'worst offender' category," Walker said.

He urged the Israeli government to move quickly to honour its pledges to enact intellectual property rights legislation, including improved copyright laws and prosecute offenders.

Walker also said Israel should begin "large-scale awareness programs on the importance of IPRs in schools, government ministries and the general public."

The envoy noted that U.S.-Israeli trade and investment were growing despite a global economic slowdown, it still lagged behind Israel-EU commerce by a two-to-one margin.

"Given our unique and close bilateral relationship, we would like to close the gap," he said.

Robust economy pushes Australian mergers and acquisitions to record

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australia's robust economy and relative immunity to global shocks helped merger and acquisition activity surge to record levels in 1998, a survey said on Friday.

The Ernst and Young Corporate Finance Mergers and Acquisitions Index also forecast takeover activity this year would match last year's frantic pace.

According to the index, acquisitions rose 24 per cent in 1998 to 271 from 218 while growth by value was up 12 per cent at 14.6 billion dollars (\$9.2 billion).

The survey attributed the takeover fever to Australia's resilient economy and an investment exodus from floundering Asian economies.

"This growth has been fuelled by a variety of factors but the overriding issue

is the strong and stable state of the domestic economy which has generated the confidence for management to seek acquisitions," it said.

A related reason is Australia's growing appeal as an investment safe haven in our region. Australian companies looking for acquisitions have been more reluctant than offshore companies to venture into Asia due to the continued uncertainty and volatility of many Asian economies," the survey added.

Ernst and Young corporate finance director Peter Kempen said local and international buyers were comforted by the combination of good growth, low inflation and a stable currency.

"Already in the first quarter we have seen evidence of the strength and depth of activity, and we're expecting that to be sustained," Kempen said.

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Orthodoxi qualify to Asian Clubs Championship

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Al Orthodoxi, the Kingdom's basketball champions, Thursday clinched the 2nd West Asian Basketball Championship title to qualify to the Asian Clubs Championship which will be held in Beirut May 22-29.

They beat Palestine's Al Quds 78-58 in the last match of the event in which only three teams competed although the tournament was due to have brought together 7 teams.

It was the third time Al Orthodoxi qualified to the finals but their task was made easier this time by the loss of its serious rivals when title favourites, Lebanese champions Al Hikma, pulled out of the event and were followed by Iran's Baykan, Syria's Al Wihdeh and Yemen's Al Mina.

Al Orthodoxi clinched the sole qualifying berth to the finals after beating Iraq's Air Defence team 100-73. The Iraqi team had beat Palestinian team 87-71.

Joined by some national team players on their line-up to prepare the team for the upcoming Pan-Arab Games, Al Orthodoxi only managed a 34-28 win

in the first half. But coach Murad Barakat was satisfied with overall performance and said his club would host a major European team before heading to Beirut for the finals.

Al Hikma, Arab champions for the last two years, with professional players on the team, cited injuries on their lineup and preferred to stay away from the competition having automatically qualified to the Asian Clubs Championship as hosts of the finals which will include 10 titleholding Asian teams: the top four from the last championship, one each from the ABC's five zones and the host nation.

The top Asian teams will be Al Hikma, Al Orthodoxi, the champion teams of South Korean, Chinese Taipei, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and the Gulf Champion.

Al Orthodoxi and Al Ahli both previously represented the Kingdom in the Asian Clubs Championship.

Al Orthodoxi finished 5th among 7 teams in 3rd championship in 1988 but it was Al Ahli who secured the best result with a fourth place finish in 1995 when they took part in the 6th championship in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Al Orthodoxi took part in the 7th

championship in the Philippines finishing 7th among 8 teams.

Jordan's 1997 champions Al Jazireh hosted the 1st West Asian Qualifiers last year but Al Riyadi clinched the qualifying berth to the 9th Asian finals playing against Al Mina, Al Wihdeh and Iran's Zobahan.

The West Asian Championship was initiated with the formation of Asian Basketball Confederation's (ABC) West Asia Zone last year and three championships have been held so far. The women's and the U-18 youth's tournaments and the 1st West Asian Championship in which five teams took part.

The International Basketball Federation, FIBA, has approved for the champion club of Asia to participate in the McDonalds Championship which will be held in Italy later this year.

The McDonalds Championship, a high-level tourney, groups the world's top teams including the NBA champion, two teams from Europe, one team from South America and the best team from Oceania. From now on, the Asian champion will take part in the annual event biennially.

Krajicek knocked out of Japan Open

TOKYO (AFP) — Top seed Richard Krajicek became the biggest casualty of the week when he fell victim to Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden in the quarterfinals of the Japan Open tennis tournament on Friday.

The 1996 Wimbledon champion from the Netherlands, the winner in London and Key Biscayne last month, found it tough to play his favourite serve and volley game and fell 6-7, 5-7, 6-1.

"I was feeling a little bit tired today, especially in the second set. I thought I would make the point shorter and go for my shots a little bit more ... it was windy, so it was difficult to control," said Krajicek.

"So I was taking too much risk. I was rushing to keep the point short — that was basically what happened."

Krajicek said he could not hit his second serve well enough to play his serve and volley game, saying: "It looked like suicide playing second serve and volley."

"Normally 50 to 70 per cent I'd like to play serve and volley on a second serve. Today I was always rallying ... it was a different kind of tennis than I'm used to playing."

Spain also progressed building a 3-0 lead after just 33 minutes and running out 3-2 winners over the United States — they will meet Ghana in the quarterfinals.

Mali completed the quarter-final line-up when they defeated Cameroon 5-4 with a golden goal in extra-time having come back from 4-2 down with just 14 minutes left on the clock — their reward is a meeting with hosts Nigeria, who scraped through on penalties against the Republic of Ireland on Wednesday.

Two excellent efforts rounded off the Mexican's fiesta night with Juan Pablo Rodriguez firing in a fierce shot from the edge of the area and Luis Gonzalez produced a delightful lob for the coup de grace.

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Earlier, Nicolas Kiefer needed a tough two hours

51 minutes to blow away third-seeded Thomas Enqvist of Sweden 6-7

(5/7), 7-5, 6-4 in a series of hard-hit baseline rallies for a place in the next round against Bjorkman.

"Today, I think it was important that I served very good and I changed my game a little bit from the baseline. I hit some slow shots, some fast shots," said Kiefer, 21.

"It was very difficult to make the last point. I had to stay in the match and I did it very well. I broke him straight back each time in the first set ... it's very important against these guys," he added.

The other semifinal match will be played between fourth seed Thomas Johansson of Sweden and seventh seed Wayne Ferreira of South Africa.

Johansson eased aside Sébastien Lareau of Canada 6-1, 6-4, while Ferreira outplayed Kenneth Carlsen of Denmark 3-6, 6-2, 6-3.



German tennis player Nicolas Kiefer returns the ball to Thomas Enqvist of Sweden during their quarter-final match in the Japan Open tennis tournament in Tokyo. Fifth-seeded Kiefer defeated third-seeded Enqvist 6-7 (5/7), 7-5, 6-4 (AFP photo)



Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands shows his disappointment as he loses a point during the quarterfinal match against Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden in the Japan Open tennis tournament in Tokyo. Top-seeded Krajicek was defeated by eighth-seeded Bjorkman 6-3, 5-7, 1-6 (AFP photo)



Swedish tennis player Jonas Bjorkman returns the ball to Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands during their quarter-final match in the Japan Open tennis tournament in Tokyo. Top-seeded Krajicek was defeated by eighth-seeded Bjorkman 6-3, 5-7, 1-6 (AFP photo)

Blatter backs 2006 African World Cup bid

ZURICH (AFP) — Sepp Blatter, president of world football governing body FIFA, on Friday threw his support behind Africa hosting the 2006 World Cup finals.

Africa has never hosted the event and Blatter, says the continent deserves a chance provided it meets stringent requirements.

He pointed out that solidarity was needed between African countries if this dream was to be realised. At present five African countries, Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Morocco and Egypt, have expressed an interest in hosting 2006 World Cup finals.

"It would be good for the 2006 World Cup to go to an African country," said Blatter.

"I can't give an answer on the chances of Nigeria or any other country. It's up to the Executive Committee to decide. However, it would be nice if the World Cup went to an African country," he added.

Blatter was speaking during a conference here on Friday announcing the publication of a harmonised international calendar of football events.

The calendar will be presented during the draw for the 2002 World Cup qualifiers in Tokyo later this year and will come into effect in January 2005.

World Youth Cup Mexico dethrone Cup holders in fiery encounter

IBADAN (AFP) — The Mexican youth football team scored four second-half goals here on Thursday as they ended Argentina's hopes of a third successive World Youth Cup title with a 4-1 thrashing in their second round match — both sides finished with 10 men.

Mexico, who will meet Japan here on Sunday in the quarterfinals after the Japanese scraped through on penalties against Portugal earlier in the day, came from a goal down to seal their convincing win over the South Americans, who had a disappointing tournament scoring just two goals in their four matches.

The Mexicans seized the lead in the 41st minute when Luciano Galletti netted, although the evening was to end on a sour note for him as he received his marching orders from Belarus referee Sergei Shmolkov for a terrible tackle on Gerardo Torrado — Mexican captain Rafael Marquez also went for an early shower after he jostled Galletti following the injury-time incident.

The Mexicans levelled seven minutes into the second-half when Daniel Osorno headed home a right wing cross and three minutes later another header by striker Eduardo Rodriguez put them ahead.

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Sports

Jordan Times, Saturday, April 17, 1999 11

LOCAL SPORTS SCENE

Jordan wins three medals

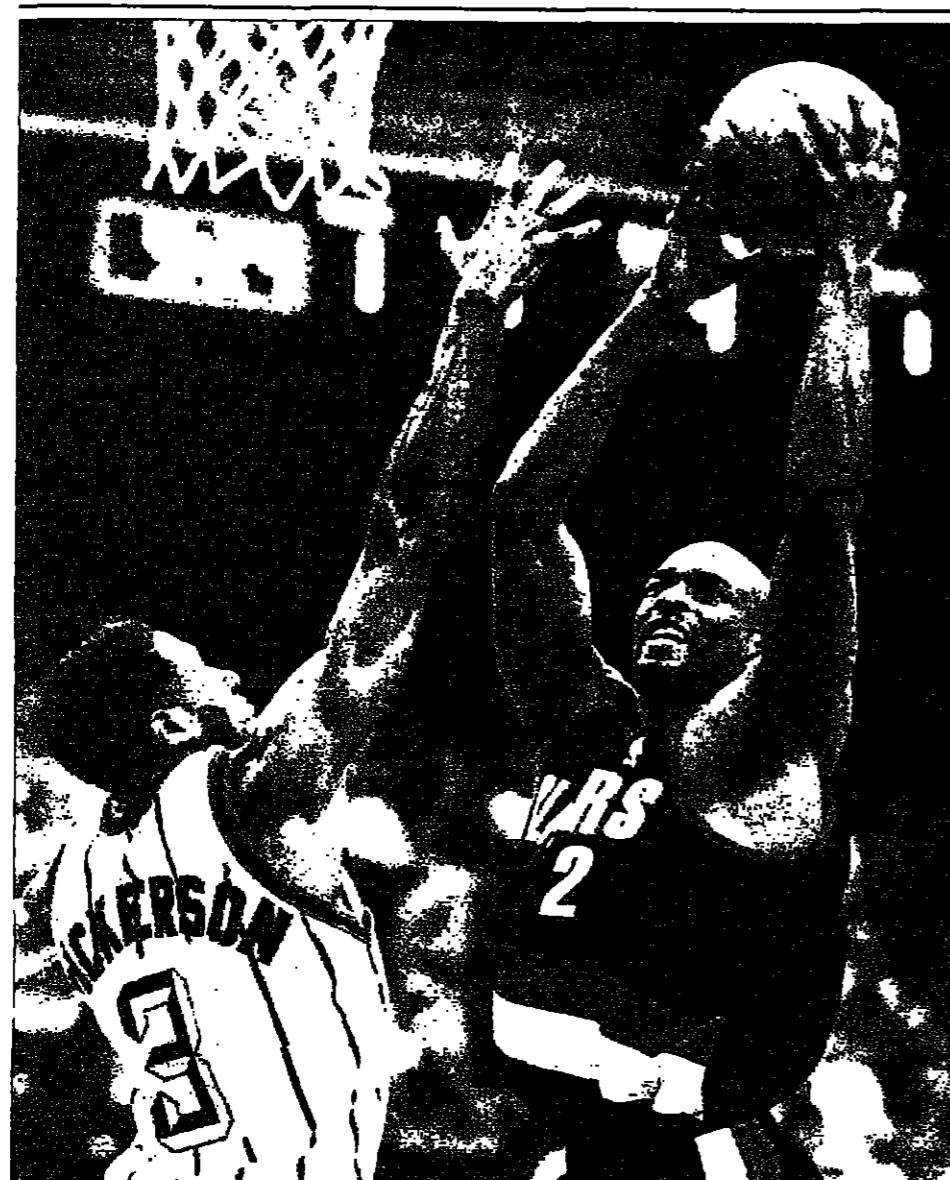
AMMAN — Jordan's Mohammad Ya'qoub has won the silver medal at the 11th Tehran International Taekwondo Championship in the 54-58 kilogrammes category, while Yasser Abu Sh'aib won the bronze. On Wednesday Mohammad Falah won the gold after he defeated his Iranian counterpart 4-0. In the 72-78kg, and 58-62kg, categories of the preliminary round, Mohammad Farajeh was to conclude Jordan's participation playing against his Tajikistani counterparts, while Iyad Saifi played against his Armenian counterpart in the 58-62kg category of the same round. The team will head back to Amman on Saturday after taking part in the event as part of preparations for the Pan-Arab Games — Al Hussein



Tournament. The Kingdom competed alongside teams from Korea, Taiwan, Egypt, Morocco, Turkey, Iran and other countries.

Arab Military Games to be held in Cairo

AMMAN — The General Assembly of the Arab Union for Military Sports has decided to hold the First Pan-Arab Games in Cairo by the end of this year. The tournament will only include five games; handball, football, boxing, orientation and marathon. Meanwhile, Jordan will participate in Arab Athletics Championship, which will be held in Lebanon in June and is part of preparations for the Pan-Arab Games.



Stacey Augmon of the Portland Trailblazers (R) shoots over Houston Rockets Michael Dickerson (L) during the first half of play at Compaq Center in Houston, Texas. The Rockets beat the Blazers 86-76 (AFP photo)

Pippen powers Rockets past Blazers

HOUSTON (R) — Scottie Pippen scored a season-high 31 points and led a strong defensive effort in the fourth quarter to help the Houston Rockets earn a pivotal 86-76 victory Thursday over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Pippen had two of his three blocked shots in the fourth quarter, when the Rockets held Portland to a dismal 3-of-15 from the field. The Blazers were outscored 23-12 in the period, recording their lowest-scoring quarter of the season.

"I just came out and played a little more aggressive tonight," said Pippen, who also had seven rebounds and tied a career high with six 3-pointers.

The Blazers, at least temporarily, lost their claim as the NBA's top team. They fell to 29-9 and dropped a game behind Utah, which is playing the Los Angeles Clippers.

"I'll put this one up as our best win of the year, period," said Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich.

Said Blazers guard Damon Stoudamire: "Scottie stepped up for them tonight. He's been there before. He knows how big these games are down the stretch, and he stepped up for them."

Charles Barkley also was big defensively and nearly had a triple-double with 20 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists.

"This is as well as we have played for all four quarters this year," Barkley said. "We didn't give them any easy baskets and that's what they thrive on. They're not as good in their half-court offence," since suffering their worst loss of the season — a 111-71 set-

back in Portland on March 7 — the Rockets have won both meetings between the teams. Houston has inched within one-half game of third-place San Antonio in the Western Conference.

In Los Angeles, Greg Ostertag recorded season highs with 16 points and 19 rebounds as the Utah Jazz took over the league's best record and avenged a humiliating defeat with a 103-89 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Karl Malone scored 25

points and John Stockton added 19 and nine assists, helping Utah (30-8) move a game in front of Portland (29-9) for the NBA's top record.

"It would be great if it were the last game, but we've got (12) more games to play," Stockton said of having the league's best record. "I just hope we're there then where we're now."

The Jazz ran their win streak to a season-high nine games.

The current roll comes after back-to-back defeats, the first of which was a 103-77 loss to the league-worst Clippers.

In Sacramento, Hersey Hawkins's 3-pointer as time expired in overtime capped a wild finish as the Seattle supersons outlasted the Sacramento Kings 99-98 for a crucial win in the hunt for the final Western Conference play-off spot.

With his team trailing 98-96 and 7.3 seconds left,

Gary Payton dribbled down the right sideline and found Hawkins alone in the right corner.

Hawkins, who finished with 15 points, released the ball just before the buzzer sounded and hit nothing but net as the Sonics

increased their lead for the final post season spot in the West to 2 1/2 games over Sacramento.

Detlef Schrempf collected 19 points for Seattle.

Chris Webber had 26 points and 21 boards for the Kings, but missed the first of two free throws to set up the Hawks's winning shot.

In Dallas, Michael Finley

scored a season-high 34

points as the Dallas Mavericks beat the Minnesota Timberwolves, who missed star forward Kevin Garnett, 101-95.

Finley, who was 11-of-16

from the field and 9-of-9 at the foul line, scored 14 points in the fourth quarter to help Dallas hold off a late run by the Timberwolves.

"Finley was sensational,"

Dallas coach Don Nelson said.

"They couldn't guard him. He was really good. He carried U.S."

Garnett, Minnesota's leading scorer and rebounder, missed his second straight game with the flu.

In Oakland, Terry Cummings scored 10 of his 14 points in the fourth quarter as the Golden State Warriors defeated the Denver Nuggets for the second time in four days 85-79.

John Starks finished with

16 points as the Warriors recorded their third straight win.

Danny Fortson collected

20 points and 23 rebounds

and Antonio McDowell had

29 and 12 for the Nuggets.

The scenes at Villa Park came

the day before the 10th anniversary of the Hillsborough tragedy

which claimed the lives of 96 Liverpool supporters.

Lakers end rocky relationship with Rodman

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Dennis Rodman's relationship with the Los Angeles Lakers proved even shorter than his rocky marriage to actress Carmen Electra.

The flamboyant forward was released by the Lakers Thursday night after less than two months with the National Basketball Association club. The move came nine days after Rodman's wife, Elecra, filed for divorce less than six months after their Las Vegas wedding.

"At this time, we feel it's in the best interests of the Lakers to end the relationship," Lakers vice president Jerry West said in a statement. "This obviously didn't work out like we had hoped, but we would like to thank Dennis for the contributions he did make to the team and wish him the best of luck in the future."

Luck has not followed Rodman or the Lakers recently.

Rodman signed a free-agent deal with Los Angeles on Feb. 23 and the Lakers won the first nine games with him in uniform. But the situation turned sour when the 37-year-old took a leave of absence on March 14 that kept him away from the team for four games as he dealt with unspecified personal problems.

Rodman also typically has been late or absent for numerous practices. When he showed up late Thursday, coach Kurt Rambis sent him home. West issued his statement sometime later.

The Lakers struggled recently with him in the lineup, losing four of their last seven games and failing to fifth place in the Western Conference.

A member of five NBA championship teams, including the last three with the Chicago Bulls, Rodman led the league in rebounding the previous seven seasons.

Abu Samra wins RACJ Gauloises National Rally

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Ma'rour Abu Samra Friday led in 10 out of 11 special stages to win the Gauloises Spring National Rally, the inaugural rally of the 1999 season, organised by the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ).

Abu Samra and co-driver Amjad Al Shamaileh drove their Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution to victory leaving Bashar Bustami and co-driver Raffi Bilemian in second place while Mohammad Al Daoud and Khaled Zakaria came in third.

Bustami, in another Mitsubishi, led the first special stage but Abu Samra took control from then on leading the 11 starters in the 286-kilometre event.

Fifteen drivers had initially registered to take part in the national rally which included 81 kilometres of 11 special stages in areas close to the capital which have been assigned to draw more spectators.

Only seven cars finished the rally which set out from RACJ driving through Yajouz, Abu Nusair, Rumman, Slehi, Kassarat, Iraq Al Amir, the Dead Sea, Mushqgar, Mouse Springs, Siyagh and Na'our.

Jordan Drivers Open champion in 1996 and 1998 Ahmad Daoud, went out after gear trouble in the second special stage while his elder brother 1997 champion

Mohammad Daoud, representing the Gauloises team, remained among top three positions almost throughout.

For RACJ officials and Jordanian drivers, the rally is considered as a serious practice for the first day of the 17th Jordan International Rally — one of the most prestigious sports events on the Kingdom's sports calendar scheduled for May 13-14.

RACJ Wednesday unveiled a three-year sponsorship agreement with the French firm Seita that will cover auto sports events in the Kingdom until the year 2001.

Seita which markets the cigarette brands of Gauloises and Gitanes will sponsor five rallies and eight carting events as well as the Rumman Hill Climb and other events on the RACJ calendar.

Gauloises, which entered the Jordanian market in 1998, is a main sponsor of auto sports worldwide, especially Formula 1 events.

Gauloises will fully sponsor a team of six competitors in the Carting Championship as well as one driver, Mohammad Al Daoud and co-driver Khaled Zakaria in a Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution, in the future.

The Jordan Rally will be the second leg of the Middle East Rally Championship after the inaugural UAE Rally won by Mohammad Ben Sulayem.

Last year's champion Ben Sulayem of the United Arab

Emirates (UAE), eight times winner of the Jordan Rally title, will be competing in the Jordan International Rally, as well as last year's runner up Cypriot Andreas Tsouloftas and third place finisher Australia's Ron Cremen.

With co-driver Ronan Morgan, 10-time Middle East champion Ben Sulayem last year dominated the two-day 23-stage rally for the third consecutive year.

Jordan's top competitor was Ahmad Al Daoud and partner Malek Hariri who came in fourth overall as only fifteen out of 29 starters finished the rally including seven Jordanians.

Asphalt roads form the first day's stages while the second day's desert tracks prove to be the ultimate test of experience, stamina and well-maintained and sponsored teams.

No Jordanian has won the rally since it started in 1981.

The best Jordanian showing was third place finishes by Ziyad Bustami in 1981. His Majesty King Abdullah in 1986 and 1988; Hani Bisharat in 1987; Amjad Farrah in 1993, and Ma'rour Abu Samra in 1995.

Real ready to snap up Zidane

MADRID (AFP) — Troubled Spanish giants Real Madrid are ready to snap up World Footballer of the Year Zinedine Zidane if he quits Juventus admitted club president Lorenzo Sanz on Friday.

"We would love to have Zidane," said Sanz. "I know that his wife comes from Algeria (southern Spain) and he has expressed his wish to come and play in the League at the end of his contract with Juventus."

Real coach John Toshack has already warned that there could well be a clear-out after what has been disastrous season for the Spanish giants and Zidane could be just the sort of player he could use to take his side back to the top.

The deposed European Cup holders awful season reached rock bottom last weekend with a humiliating 5-1 defeat by Celta Vigo. They are now fifth in the league, 10 points behind league leaders Barcelona.

Zidane admitted on Thursday he was not happy in Turin and wanted to move to Barcelona. Real Madrid or Atletico Madrid when he eventually parts company with the Italian champions.

Meanwhile, Joan Gaspart vice-president of Spanish league leaders Barcelona said he was not interested in signing Zidane.

"It's always very flattering when a great player says he wants to join Barca. But without wishing to offend Zidane, the best strikers in the world are already here."

The 26-year-old is under contract with Juventus until 2004 but friends of the player say there is no way he remains with the Italian side for another four years.

Juventus have shown that they can win the big matches but my wife, my family and my lifestyle count more than my job," said Zidane.

Zidane is also believed to be unhappy with the tactics used by new coach Carlo Ancelotti.

Fences fear raised after Villa Park invasion

LONDON (AFP) — Relatives of the Hillsborough disaster victims fear the pitch invasion following Manchester United's FA Cup victory over Arsenal could lead to the return of perimeter fences.

Several hundred fans, mostly United supporters, ran onto the Villa Park pitch following the 2-1 win in the semi-final replay on Wednesday.

"That is the last thing we want — to go back to those days after all the progress that's been made.

"The fans must realise that they only get their own clubs into trouble by their actions."

United fans feel too much is being made of the incident and they have reacted angrily to Hood's accusations.

Andy Walsh, chairman of the Independent Manchester United Supporters' Association (IMUSA), said: "Mr. Hood is



Fahad Khateeb (R, #8) of Saudi Arabia's Al-Ittihad heads the ball for the assist of Al-Ittihad's second goal, while Iraq's Talaba defender Wahab Labed (L, #25) looks on during the first half of the semi-final of Asian Cup Winners' Cup football tournament in Tokyo Friday (AFP photo)

well over the top in his comments.

"Emotionally it was a very highly-charged game and whilst recognising that Mr. Hood has got his job to do, he's also got to understand that after one of the greatest FA Cup semi-final games ever and certainly one of the best goals ever scored in the FA Cup semi-finals, emotions run high."

"We don't condone people running on the pitch, but United fans should be congratulated for the risk they took with their behaviour."

"There was not one reported incident of United fans baying Arsenal fans and it was just a joyous outpouring of relief and celebration and should be seen as such."

The Football Supporters' Association (FSA) backed IMUSA and they also felt Hood was out of order with his comments.

Chair Alison Pilling said: "If he's head of security, isn't his job to look after the safety of fans rather than moan about how they celebrate when their team scores and gets through to the FA Cup Final?"

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Bouteflika accepts Algerian presidency amid controversy

ALGIERS (AFP) — Abdulaziz Bouteflika on Friday accepted his election as Algeria's next president in a poll snubbed at the last minute by six opposition candidates.

"Despite the manoeuvres aimed at disturbing voters and discrediting their choice in the eyes of international opinion, the Algerian people have made a clear choice and have democratically elected me to the presidency of the republic," he said in a statement.

Supporters in Algiers reacted to his acceptance speech by driving through the streets in flag-draped cars, honking their horns.

Bouteflika, 62, a fierce nationalist who was foreign minister under the hardline socialist rule of Colonel Houari Boumedienne (1965-78), enjoys wide backing within Algeria's military establishment and won a five-year term of office.

He will succeed President Liamine Zeroual, whose surprise announcement in September that he wished to cut short his mandate by nearly two years precipitated the election.

"In this moment of great emotion for me, I wish to

express my thanks to all the citizens who have given me their vote," said Bouteflika, who officially garnered 73 per cent of Thursday's vote, with official turnout at 60 per cent.

Bouteflika had said he would not accept the presidency without a "large majority" show of support from Algeria's 17.5 million voters.

"To those who made another choice, I wish to say that I pledge to be — in all impartiality and in all justice — the president of all Algerians," his statement said.

Bouteflika's six rivals stood down on Wednesday, the day before the vote, charging massive vote-rigging.

Earlier Friday, riot police cracked down to prevent a march called to protest Bouteflika's election in a vote considered constitutionally illegal by his rivals.

Riot police dispersed several hundred demonstrators who planned to hold a protest march in defiance of a ban pronounced late Thursday.

Demonstrators chanted "down with dictatorship" and "killer regime" as people looked on from apartment blocks, before riot police dispersed the protesters. About

25 were arrested.

The protest march had been called by the opposition Socialist Forces Front (FFS) of Hocine Ait Ahmad.

The French statement by foreign ministry spokeswoman Anne Gazeau-Secret was "unacceptable interference" in Algeria's internal affairs, her Algerian counterpart, Abdul Aziz Sbaa, said in a statement carried by the official APS news agency.

Gazeau-Secret had said: "France continues to hope that the Algerian people's aspiration for democracy can find expression within a pluralist framework."

Zeroual's decision to cut short his mandate was thought to have been prompted by the military, a powerful institution which has played a key role in Algerian politics since independence from France in 1962.

The ex-candidate said the last-minute action was forced by developments. "In the last three days before the election there was a change in the situation. Before, there were elements in the establishment that favoured neutrality. Then they all joined ranks behind Bouteflika," Ibrahim said.

Meanwhile, Algeria lashed out at France for expressing concern over the "situation that has been created" by the presidential vote.

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With the credibility of Bouteflika's mandate in question, prospects remain dim that Algeria will soon pull out of an economic crisis coupled with civil strife that has claimed up to 100,000 lives, according to Western estimates, since 1992, when the military blocked electoral victory for the FIS.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives cables on Hijra new year

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Friday received cables of congratulations on the Hijra new year from heads of Arab and Islamic states, including Sultan Qaboos of Oman, Syrian President Hafez Assad, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Tunisian President Zaid Al Abidine Ben Ali, UAE President Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan, Algerian President Liamine Zeroual, Qatari Emir Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Gambian President Yahya Jammeh and Brunei Sultan Haji Hassam Bulquid. King Abdullah also received cables of congratulations from a number of senior Jordanian officials.

King confers medals on retired officers

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah on Thursday visited the Armed Forces headquarters, where he was received by Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Miri Kaabneh and senior officers. King Abdullah and Kaabneh discussed issues of concern to the Armed Forces. King Abdullah also conferred Royal medal upon a number of officers who were retired recently for their efforts in serving the Armed Forces. Also on Thursday, the King visited Hamzeh Ben Al Mutaleb Brigade, where he was briefed on the unit's duties and activities.

Russia's U.N. envoy boycotts Butler

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — Russia's U.N. Ambassador Sergei Lavrov boycotted a meeting Thursday with Iraqi arms inspector Richard Butler who presented the U.N. Security Council with a new report on disarmament, which Lavrov refused to discuss. A discussion on the report by the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) to monitor Iraq's disarmament is a "waste of time," Lavrov stated, noting that inspectors have not been in the country since December. "I mentioned that we will not be participating in the discussions of UNSCOM and IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] reports, for the simple reason that these reports do not add anything new to the Security Council's work in Iraq," Lavrov told reporters. Russia believes the Australian diplomat is directly responsible for the December bombing of Iraq by U.S. and British forces.

Palestinians pray on seized land

RAFAH (AFP) — Hundreds of Palestinians gathered in the southern Gaza Strip to say Friday prayers at a site which settlers from nearby Jewish enclaves had attempted to seize two days before witnesses said. Some 350 Muslim faithful prayed on the 16-hectare area near the settlement of Morag near Rafah which had been fenced in by settlers and planted with hundreds of olive trees, they said. The prayers were observed from some distance away by a large force of Israeli soldiers and about 50 settlers, but neither group intervened when worshippers uprooted the trees. "I was surprised when dozens of settlers came here at night the day before yesterday and started planting trees on my land. I tried to resist but they were guarded by soldiers who threw me out," Mahmoud Al Dahir, who owns six hectares at the site, told AFP. "I won't leave again even if it costs me my life." Al Dahir vowed near a tent set up by Palestinian protesters who intend to remain on the site. Palestinian liaison officer Khaled Abu Al Ala said a protest had been lodged with the Israeli army about the alleged settler violations but that he had not yet received a reply.

'PKK rebels kill five Turk soldiers'

TUNCELI (R) — Kurdish rebels killed five Turkish soldiers and wounded 10 in an ambush in eastern Turkey on Friday, an army official said. He said guerrillas loyal to captured Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan attacked soldiers returning to barracks near the village of Aktuluk, some 20 km west of the town of Tunceli. A number of PKK rebels were killed in the ensuing fire fight, but it was not yet clear how many, the official said. Troops backed by U.S.-made Super Cobra strike helicopters have mounted an operation to track down the group of around 20 guerrillas who were hiding in a heavily wooded mountainous area near the site of the ambush, the official said.

Netanyahu probed over bribery charges

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli police questioned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday over allegations of bribery that emerged last month involving his foreign minister, Ariel Sharon. "Investigators took the prime minister's testimony regarding this case," said police spokeswoman Linda Menushin, without elaborating. The investigation centres on allegations that Sharon granted favours to a general-turned-businessman, Avigdor Ben Gal, to change his testimony in a libel case filed by the minister against the Israeli newspaper Haaretz.

Israelis debate role for Shas leader Deri

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli politicians were in a quandary on Friday over whether a key powerbroker should still be allowed to influence the shape of Israeli government after being ordered to jail for corruption.

Arieh Deri, leader of the ultra-Orthodox Sephardic party Shas and a close ally of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was sentenced to four years in jail Thursday for corruption, but will remain free pending an appeal expected to last months.

In the meantime, a defiant Deri has vowed to lead Shas into general elections May 17, when many analysts believe the party will increase its 10-seat holding in the 120-member parliament — in part because of their chief's legal plight.

Already the third biggest party in Israel after the Labour Party of Ehud Barak and Netanyahu's rightist Likud bloc, Shas — and Deri — look certain to hold a key voice in post-election negotiations on the next coalition government. The situation is unprecedented in Israel and while many politicians demanded Deri quit politics, the three main candidates for prime minister in May — Netanyahu, Barak and Centre Party head Yitzhak Mordechai — distinguished themselves by their silence on the matter.

The three leaders — who need the support of Shas voters to win election and could rely on an alliance with Shas in order to govern — issued nearly identical statements recognising the court's legitimacy in convicting and sentencing Deri.

But, clearly anxious not to alienate the Shas electorate, they each noted Deri also had the right to appeal and left the door wide open to cooperating with him after the elections. In contrast, some lower level

politicians from all three men's parties insisted Deri quit politics.

"A man condemned for corruption cannot lead a party or play a role in political life," said the Labour Party's Uzi Baram.

"It would not be right to conduct negotiations with Deri," added Mordechai's deputy, Amnon Lipkin-Shahak.

Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein for his part lashed out at "political leaders who treat Deri like an associate in future coalition negotiations."

"This is like the silence of the lambs," he said.

Israel's biggest circulation newspaper, the Yediot Achronot, also denounced the opportunistic stance of key politicians in a lead editorial titled simply, "Cowards."

"The Deri affair is a test of the courage of our political leaders... but until now none have said loud and clear that someone found guilty of such serious crimes in a court of law can no longer play an active role on the political stage," Yediot said.

Deri was convicted of taking more than \$150,000 in bribes between 1985 and 1990 when he was director general and then minister at the interior ministry — the first minister in Israel's history to be convicted of bribe-taking.

In handing down the jail sentence against Deri, a three-member panel of judges said his crime was "dishonourable" — meaning under Israeli law that he will not be able to serve as a government minister for 10 years.

But the law allows Deri to run for parliament and even serve as a lawmaker from his prison cell.

Most Israeli commentators said Friday that they believe the tactic will succeed in widening Shas' presence in parliament — and its leverage over the next government no matter who is prime minister.

This was Barak's biggest lead over Netanyahu in a Gallup poll since early elections were called in

resumption of weapons inspections unless the U.N. lifts the international embargo imposed on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in 1990.

Since the U.N. inspectors left Iraq, several governments have voiced concern that Baghdad might return to building weapons of mass destruction.

The Russian plan calls for the lifting of U.N.-sanctioned international sanctions on Iraq, while the British proposal would keep the sanctions in place but allow Iraq to sell all the crude oil it wants.

Debate on the two draft resolutions by the 15-member Security Council is expected to begin Friday, as part of the United Nations' attempt to reshape relations with Iraq since U.S.-British air strikes began in December.

U.S. inspectors in charge of monitoring the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction left Iraq under pressure a day before the bombing campaign began on Dec. 15. Baghdad has refused to allow the

Inspection and Monitoring (UNCI-M).

The new inspection regime would be a "reinforced system of ongoing monitoring and verification" capable of carrying out "intrusive inspections," the draft resolution said.

Under the plan, Iraq would give UNCIIM inspectors "immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access" to any site or government official in Iraq.

UNCIIM inspectors inherit UNSCOM's archives and experts with the exception of its director Richard Butler, who has already announced he will step down when his two-year mandate expires in June.

An UNCIIM director would be appointed by July 1 at the latest, the draft resolution said.

The proposal stressed that while "conditions do not exist" for the lifting of U.N. sanctions on Iraq, the \$5.2



GRASS FASHION: A couple dressed in grass-like matching suits on Friday stand over a flower bed on the opening day of the 'Gruen 99' (Green 99) garden festival. The festival opened its gates to the public in Weil am Rhein, Germany, on Friday. The couple are part of the so-called 'silent events' that will be displayed together with seasonal flowers until Oct. 17 (Reuters photo)

Internal document warns against Israeli annexation of West Bank

TEL AVIV (AP) — The Israeli government has been told by a legal advisor that annexing parts of the West Bank would be rejected by most of the world and would be seen as a violation of international law, an official confirmed on Friday.

Israel has threatened to annex territory in the West Bank if Palestinian President Yasser Arafat unilaterally declares statehood on May 4, the end of the five-year interim period of autonomy.

The 60-page report by Foreign Ministry Legal Advisor Alan Baker examines legal consequences of the end of the interim period, said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Baker said the best solution is to extend the interim period by

agreement, said the official, confirming a report in the Haaretz daily. Baker said Israeli annexation might trigger Palestinian violence.

Annexation would not be recognised by most of the world and would probably be seen as a violation of international law, Baker said.

David Bar-Ilan, a senior adviser to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, rejected Baker's advice, saying Israel's claim to the West Bank is better than anyone else's.

Joel Singer, a former foreign ministry legal advisor who helped formulate the autonomy agreements, backed Netanyahu's position.

Singer wrote in a recent article that while five-year interim period expires May 4, the two sides' commitment to negotiate the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, rather than take unilateral actions, is open-ended.

A unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood would be a flagrant violation of the autonomy accords and would enable Israel to take countermeasures, such as annexation, Singer said.

Arafat has signalled that he is ready to extend the interim period, but a final decision will be made only April 27 when a senior PLO body, the Palestinian Central Council, meets in the Gaza Strip to discuss the statehood issue.

It is widely believed that a unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood would help Israel's hardline prime minister win re-election May 17.

Barak widens poll lead over Netanyahu

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Barely a month ahead of Israeli general elections, Labour Party chief Ehud Barak widened his lead in opinion polls Friday over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In a similar survey published last week by Maariv, Barak had only a three per cent lead — less than the poll's 4.5 per cent margin of error.

In a second poll published by the rival Yediot Achronot newspaper, Barak had a five-point advance over Netanyahu — 47 per cent to 42 per cent, again with 11 per cent of the electorate undecided.

Barak and Netanyahu lead a field of five candidates who will compete for the prime ministership on May 17. If, as seems likely, no one wins more than 50 per cent of the vote, the two leading contenders will hold a run-off on June 1.

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Netanyahu 34 per cent to 33 per cent, with Centre Party leader Yitzhak Mordechai, a former Netanyahu ally, garnering 17 per cent, far-right candidate Bezymi Begin four per cent and Azmi Bishara, an Arab Israeli, three per cent.

Nine per cent of respondents were undecided.

It was the first opinion poll of the campaign to put Barak ahead of Netanyahu in the first round of voting.

The surveys were conducted following a first television campaign debate between Netanyahu and Mordechai on Tuesday in which Barak refused to participate.

The debate was marked by a sharp personal assault on the prime minister by Mordechai, whom Netanyahu fired as defence minister in January.

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Man convicted of sticking tongue out at neighbour

SYDNEY (AP) — A man who stuck his tongue out at his neighbour lost his appeal on Friday over being fined for breaching an apprehended violence order. In the New South Wales supreme court, Justice Michael Adams found there was no doubt or question as to the guilt of Gary Bayliss. On June 17, 1997, Bayliss was fined 350 Australian dollars (\$220) after being convicted of breaching a court order taken out by his neighbour, Ronald Allen Bates, in August 1996. Bayliss had denied the breach, which alleged that on Oct. 31, 1996, he made an offensive gesture and poked his tongue out toward Bates.

Cough leads to wrong verdict

CARDIFF (AP) — When a juror coughed, defendant Alan Rashid had a right to feel sick. The cough came just as the jury